

PROBLEMS IN EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION

The "New Monarchies" and Representative Assemblies

*Medieval Constitutionalism or Modern
Absolutism?*



Arthur J. Slavin

C. HEATH AND COMPANY

THE "NEW MONARCHIES"
AND REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLIES
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UNDER THE EDITORIAL DIRECTION OF

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*Medieval Constitutionalism or
Modern Absolutism?*

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

Arthur J. Slavin, ROCKWELL UNIVERSITY

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Introduction

THE problem of the "New Monarchy" is a genuine one. The inquiring student needs look no farther afield than the first two volumes of the *New Cambridge Modern History* to ascertain that fact. He might reasonably expect the work in question to provide a relatively consistent view of monarchy as it existed in Europe north of the Alps, between the Elbe and the Pyrenees, in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Quite the contrary! Professor Denis Hay, in his "Introduction" to the first volume, notes a prevailing tendency to absolute monarchy distinguishing the period 1493-1520.¹ Whereas Dr. G. R. Elton, summarizing the contents of the second volume, while admitting the growing strength of the secular state, warns against the easy acceptance of the "New Monarchy" thesis. "In truth," he notes, "these western monarchies were less autocratic and self-consciously innovative than is commonly supposed. By comparison with the despots of the East . . . they were as yet a long way from the absolutism of the seventeenth century. Everywhere there survived remnants of past separatism and constitutional rights. . . ."²

Let it be argued that English scholars are simply more querulous than their continental counterparts, we may note the same sort of disagreement among leading French and German historians. Roland Mousnier, one of France's most distinguished historians, holds that about 1500 "The majority of states were evolving towards absolute monarchy."³ His promi-

nent colleague, the late Henri Hauser, expressed the same view in his masterful study of the sixteenth century: "Everywhere, one may say, the hereditary monarchies evolved towards absolutism."⁴ Their countryman Leon Cahen, on the other hand, ventured emphatic disagreement. Speaking specifically of England, he noted the widespread lack of consensus about what the words "New Monarchy" denoted. He was driven to conclude that "If there was a new monarchy under Henry VII it was in this sense: that he re-established the strong kingship of the past centuries. The Tudor monarchy was the resurrection of a tradition."⁵ Gerhard Ritter, perhaps the greatest of present-day German historians, agrees with Mousnier and Hartung. In his chief work on the sixteenth century he speaks of beginning "the history of the new, the absolute monarchies," with the generation of kings that includes Henry VII of England and Louis XI of France.⁶

In pointing out the real disagreement about the meaning of the term "New Monarchy" as applied generally to the regimes of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and the further implication that the monarchies in question were "new" in the sense of belonging to the modern rather than the medieval period of European history, one has only opened the inquiry. What exactly was the nature of these monarchies? That question cannot be simply answered by reference to an-

¹ *New Cambridge Modern History*, I, 8.

² *New Cambridge Modern History*, II, 8.

³ *Les XVI^e et XVII^e Siècles* (Paris, 1956), p. 109.

⁴ *Les Débuts de L'Âge Moderne* (Paris, 1956), p. 7.

⁵ *L'Évolution Politique de L'Angleterre* (Paris, 1960), p. 16.

⁶ *Die Neuorganisation Europas im 16. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1950), p. 30.

other term, be it absolutism or any synonym chosen for the purpose of labelling the complex of institutions comprehended by the "New Monarchy" label itself. The historian and the student of history alike must always be wary of mere definitions. It is their obligation to seek to know something more substantial about the meaning of the term, especially as it may be expressed in details drawn from the history of particular countries and the reigns of particular kings.

As one begins to examine the facts behind the label, old familiar data come to mind in a richness of detail. One recalls the oft-repeated accounts describing the England of Henry VII after the victory over the Yorkists at Market Bosworth, or the France of Charles VIII and Louis XI, slowly recovering from the ravage of the Hundred Years' War. For more than a century aristocratically inspired anarchy, royal incapacity and waning clerical dominance had beset a society once seemingly articulated in three orders of warriors, workers and worshipful priests. The Black Death crept in with rats and lice, contributing to the untuning of the string of order, while peasants jostled the noblesse as arable gave way to pasture in a countryside Thomas More complained of when he noted that sheep threatened to eat up men! A European *Zeremoniell* or time of troubles was at hand. The fabric of the old Europe was rent. Such is the picture constituting the stock in trade of historians of the early modern period.

The historians perhaps unconsciously emulated the thought of the men of the waning middle ages they wrote about in their abhorrence of a vacuum—even a chronological one! Something had to fill the void left by the collapse of the old order vividly proclaimed by both chroniclers and poets. Because collapse was not followed by dissolution something new must have come to fill the void. The "New Monarchy" was the answer!

A new Europe was called into being, as if by a second act of creation. Historians

eagerly described new dynasties as those re-invigorated royal lines which were just as good as new ones. A halo of royalty surrounded every aspect of the age. The Roman church and the decadent feudalities were eclipsed along with the other fancies of medieval particularism and provincialism. A new style of absolute centralized government grew up, with new techniques of justice, new administrative organs, new assertions of the royal prerogative and new times for proud assemblies of the realm that had first appeared in the forgotten middle ages. The "New Monarchies," it was argued, were centralized states in the modern fashion, over which kings presided *de facto* *permanently* absolute—by virtue of their absolute power—without regard to the restraints inherent in the old ideals which had placed limits upon secular power. These *limes* which were best typified by feudal ideas of contract, the vast structure of the Catholic Church and the maxims of Roman law which taught that "what concerned all had to have the consent of all" were now set aside. The modern state was transposed onto the stage of history, absolute in character and impotent of the multiplicity of authorities that characterized the medieval world-view. The new *Mensah* was the king.

In place of the old unity in multiplicity historians found a simple new unity best represented by that terrible maxim of the Roman law, *quod principum placuit habet legis vigorem* (whatever pleases the prince has the force of law). Historians wrote a new primer, complete with a new Thesis: The Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Reception of Roman law. The first provided the secular and individualistic impulse capitalized upon by the kings. The second ended forever the absurdity of divided sovereignty, bringing to a close the era of papal tutelage. The third pushed into the furthest recesses of thought the notion of consent. That was the classic pattern presented by A. F. Pollard's *Factors in Modern History* in 1907. He be-

lieved the dialectic of history had moved relentlessly beyond its medieval phase. Half-splitters might quibble about the event which started the modern world on its way, with some opting for Charles VIII's victory over his Estates-General in 1494, while others accepted the more material triumph of Henry Tudor at Bosworth in the following year. What matter! The "New Monarchies" had come into being; their rise was accompanied by the sensible decline of representative institutions.

The modern state seen by Pollard had both negative and positive supporting struts. On the positive side were to be found rationalism, the rise of bureaucratic administration, the emergence of the middle class firmly allied with ruling dynasties and the developing idea of absolutism. Negatively considered, the emergent states rested on the decline of the aristocracy, the ruin of the church and the decadence of parliamentarism. Pollard's view has been vigorously championed in more recent times by Roland Mousnier, who incorporated into his treatment of the thesis a wealth of detail utilizing data developed in more recent social and economic studies of the period. Mousnier, however, to a greater degree than Pollard, recognizes the survival of limiting agencies from the medieval epoch and recognizes also that fully developed absolutism emerged only after a period of exclusivistic development. Both the essence of Pollard's original statement and Mousnier's affirmative revision are here presented under the rubric of The "New Monarchy" Thesis.

Almost every aspect of his thesis has received careful scrutiny in the generation since Pollard's *Factors* was first published. It would take several volumes like the present one to discuss the work of scholars who either support or disavow the thesis in every particular. The role of the aristocracy, the gentry, the merchant-princes, the churchmen and the bureaucrats has been carefully evaluated. The nature of central government and its relation to the declining feudalities has provoked talk of "ar-

istocratic resurgence" and "renascent fiscal feudalism." The structural supports of the thesis, both positive and negative, have been tested, with the result that some are now accepted and others found wanting.

Because the literature is so voluminous and the problem so complex, it is clearly impossible to try to deal with it in its totality. For this reason, the essays in this volume will focus solely on the related themes of the expansion of princely government, the centralization of power, and the interaction of these with the traditions of representative institutions.

Pollard's consideration of the relationship of princes and parliaments clearly implies, and on this point he has the support of Mousnier, that there was a contest for power in the early modern period in which absolutist sovereigns triumphed over long-standing but often decadent traditions of consent. It also brings us to grips with the problem of the proper periodic designation for the monarchies in question, and some historians have been much agitated by Pollard's attempt to impose a fairly sharp medieval-modern dialectic as implicit in the work of Henry VII, Francis I, Gustavus Vasa and their contemporaries.

The next light essays, therefore, deal with the two related themes of the assertion of royal authority in government and the role played by representative assemblies especially with respect to the question of whether they limited or extended royal powers. Essays focusing on England, France, Burgundy and the Netherlands, Sweden and the Germanies provide a sufficient range of data drawn from the period of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to insure that the meaning and applicability of Pollard's thesis on a European scale can be evaluated.

In the first of these, Professor Walter C. Richardson selects finance as the key to measuring the effectiveness of government under the early Tudors. On the basis of much careful archival research, he presents arguments both for and against the traditional view of the modernity of Tudor

government. While, on the one hand, he approves of the term "New Monarchy" to describe Henry VII's regime, and readily agrees with Pollard that centralization of authority seemed to go forward at the expense of some older traditionally limiting interests, yet he also insists that Henrician government rested on medieval household organs reminiscent of those described in the justly famous studies by Thomas Frederick Tout of medieval governmental administration.⁷ Similarly Professor Richardson paradoxically emphasizes the practical absolutism of Henry VII and Henry VIII in summing up Tudor practice, while at the same time stressing their ability to make the best of the growing power of parliament, in contrast to the Stuarts who held to a rigid doctrine of *theoretical* absolutism and at the same time were unable to solve the problem of how to deal with the unruly body which occasionally had to be convened at Westminster.

Richardson's emphasis on continuity in governmental technique under the early Tudors was sharply challenged by Dr. G. R. Elton of Cambridge University. Their overall interpretations of what the Tudors had done in the way of changing the monarchy in England could hardly have been more divergent. Dr. Elton insists that medieval government was fundamentally government emanating from the king's person and his immediate entourage, while early modern government was basically independent of the royal household and was bureaucratically organized in national departments responsible to a crown whose ultimate power was rooted in parliamentary enactments. By his own criteria Elton was forced to concede that Cardinal Wolsey, for all his viceregal manner, merely restored good medieval government, whereas, only a few years later, no matter how hard a successor in office, Thomas Cromwell, labored to disguise his work under the

forms of doing business inherited from the past, his actions constituted a "revolution" in government. That revolution in government saw royal power claiming support of a truly national sovereignty established on the basis of parliamentary statutes, the effect of which was to create the modern, monarchic, nation-state. Thus Elton seemingly accepts one of Pollard's main contentions, merely delaying the appearance of the "New Monarchy" by a half century, while representing the radical refashioning of government as, in large measure, a product of the Reformation. We find to our surprise that neither Professor Richardson nor Dr. Elton rejects Pollard's usage entirely, although for the former it was more medieval than modern, for the latter it was not the result of royal initiative at all. Both agree in insisting on the vitality of parliament. Richardson seeing it chiefly as a useful annoyance to the Tudors which became a mere annoyance to the Stuarts, while for Elton its role was more positive, since it was the foundation stone of the modern state. But both make careful qualifications of the term absolutism, modifying it enough to make us wonder to what extent it is meaningful to describe the Tudor monarchy as either new or absolute?

The theme of centralization as one of the primary aims of the "New Monarchs" caught the attention of the great Belgian historian Henri Pirenne. In an important article on the Burgundian state he expounded the difficulties of a sovereign ruler in a state lacking in both ethnic and linguistic homogeneity. At the same time he tried to demonstrate that the Burgundian state was consciously built on the "modern" idea of unification, even though he was well aware of the medieval diversity which survived as the basic substratum of the monarch's power. He makes it clear that the Burgundian dukes and the Hapsburgs had to try to fashion a centralized state primarily by building upon the person powers concentrated on their heads as great feudal sovereigns in much the same way as the Capetians and other feudal monarchs had

fashioned their states in an earlier period. Read in this way, the history of the constitution in the Burgundian Netherlands seemed to follow the typical pattern of state-building used by nationally-minded princes seeking unity on the basis of dynastic principles, hardly a modern feature, and the old feudal ideals of local authorities hierarchically arranged. In describing the Burgundian dukes' efforts to centralize, Pirenne acted without offering detailed evidence that the Burgundian rulers consciously tried to use assemblies of representatives of the provinces formed in States General as a tool in unification. Traditions of local particularism, however, in the provincial assemblies proved to be too strong to make even the States General an effective force for unity. In this affirmation Pirenne departs radically from the traditional view of royal policy in the age of the "New Monarchy," a view in which rulers were held to be the destroyers of representative assemblies that loomed as rivals in the struggle for power.

A contemporary scholar, H. G. Koenigsberger, coming back in part to the same ground a half century later, sees the problem of the relationship between the monarchy and the States General in the Netherlands more in terms of the traditional "New Monarchy" thesis. He rejects Pirenne's view that the Burgundian dukes consciously tried to use the unifying potential of the States General to augment their recognized authority as feudal sovereigns. In fact, he suggests that while their policy towards it seems at times to have been ambivalent, they recognized that the States General had played a really revolutionary role in the 1470's and 1480's, usurping certain monarchical functions, and therefore they never ceased to regard it more as a dangerous rival than as a potentially useful ally. But even had the rulers accepted this latter view, Koenigsberger stresses that the States General could only have been of limited usefulness because it was energized by a self-destructive principle. It was never anything more than a "congrum of

delegates from quasi-autonomous powers" and, as such, able to put up a stubborn passive resistance against any national policies proposed by the prince but unable to institute or carry out any national policies of their own except in consequence of some rare emergency facing the people. Medieval particularism of the kind found in the Netherlands cannot be classed as "constitutionalism" opposed to growing "absolutism." It represented the triumph of local privileges and autonomy as voiced by prelates, nobles and the patrician oligarchies of the towns. Against that array of forces, whatever centralizing policies were attempted ended in failure. This close study of the States General might be said to show that the "New Monarchy" attempted by the Burgundian dukes and Hapsburg regents failed because they, unlike their successful fellow rulers, were unable to overcome the forces of particularism. The States General of the Netherlands never did duplicate the sense of England's parliament, in which the "community of the realm" found its voice. One more thing is worthy of noting here. Contrary to the "New Monarchy" thesis, the failure of Renaissance monarchy in the Netherlands seems to show the vitality of medieval particularism, despite the urbanization and "modernization" of the economic life of that part of Europe, just as a similar degree of vitality was shown by the equally advanced and equally independent Italian and German cities. Far from the bourgeoisie rallying to the support of the "New Monarchy," the urban patriciate led the assemblies in resisting royal policy. The monarchy failed precisely because there was no united nation to support the state, a fact that attempted borrowings by the rulers, first from French and then from Imperial constitutional models, could not overcome. Pirenne and Koenigsberger thus agree on this much: monarchy in the Burgundian Netherlands was never successful and never absolute. Both adduce some evidence which challenges Pollard's view, both equally contribute some evidence

* The reference is to the ground-breaking volumes that appeared under the general title *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England* (Manchester, 1920-1933).

supporting them, while undermining the unity of the medieval-modern dialectic when it is applied to the Netherlands. The reality proved too complex!

Turning to France in this period, the problem seems to be less complicated as the lines of the nation and the state appear to be so clearly etched. The French monarchy in the early modern era has been the major concern of J. Russell Major. His several books and articles based on detailed archival research have suggested some interesting revisions of previously accepted conclusions. Professor Major agrees in part with the classic thesis: the sixteenth century followed hard on the heels of an earlier royal drive to consolidate central authority in the aftermath of the disasters suffered in the wars against England and the domestic strife of the fifteenth century. But, he asks, was that drive not frustrated by a number of factors? In addition to the continued supremacy of the nobility, the traditions of corporatism expressed by lawyers in the provincial *parlements* and the inability of the crown to raise an effective standing army, he adds the financial crisis of the age as a force compelling the Renaissance kings in France, especially Francis I and Henry II, to solicit the support of the traditional representative institutions. He suggests that the cessation of activity by the Estates General between 1484 and 1560 seems to have misled older historians and caused them to look upon the era as one of royal absolutism. He corrects this view by pointing out that the *parlements* and the provincial estates played a most effective role in limiting the supposed absolutism of Francis I. He goes on to show that despite the grandeur of his court and the pretension of the royal style, Francis I literally thought of himself as the first gentleman of the realm! The historian who pays close attention to sixteenth century monarchy in France must conclude that it was in most essentials just a continuation of the monarchy of Charles VII, and as such was to endure until at least the reign of Louis XIII. Far from seeing France as

a model of continental absolutism in the fashion popularized during the era of the Renaissance by English critics like Sir John Ferris, who spoke of France as a "Turkish despotism," Major disagrees with Maitland and proclaims the sixteenth century French monarchy to be a "consultative monarchy" which changed into an efficiently run, centralized state only a century later, during the Thirty Years' War, under the guidance of Richelieu, whose spiritual heir Colbert completed the process of building a rational, absolute and modern state in France.

We have seen that historians whose special interest lies in England, Burgundy and France have formulated serious reservations about the applicability of the Pollard-Maitland analysis. They have either the modernity of the monarchies in question or their absolutism; sometimes they have done both. The continued importance of particularist forces and traditional constitutional forms, often eloquently embodied in the colloquies of parliamentary assemblies, is a striking testamentary on the character of European politics in an age of apparently growing monarchical power. With this in mind, if we turn to the north, especially to Sweden, and look to the east of the Rhine, to the Germans, even more striking signs of the vitality of representative institutions present themselves.

F. L. Carsten in his book on the politics of the German states from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries focuses on the power struggle waged by princes and parliaments for generations after the collapse of Imperial authority signalled by the issuance of the Golden Bull of 1356, a document which merely made official what had been a fact for some time. The Empire had failed to establish genuine sovereignty at the expense of the princes. In the wake of the death struggle with the papacy, and aided in part by the Interregnum of 1250-1272, both the princes and the ministerial nobility conspired to render the central power of the emperors a fig-

ment. The fourteenth and early fifteenth century witnessed political collapse in the territorial states as well, as various leagues, robber barons and dynasts were engulfed the German states, petty and great alike. As the fifteenth century progressed, however, a revival of princely interest and competence took place, with Roman law maxims emphasizing sovereign powers eagerly seized on by the princes seeking to combat the many centrifugal forces, especially those represented in the various estates. The battlefields were smaller than those of England or France, but the struggles were of a similar nature. In order to solve the religious and economic problems of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the German princes found it necessary to "work on" the particularist sympathies of the various elements in the Estates until a common sense of interest in the well-being of the territorial state was formed. Despite the alleged incapacity of the modern German when faced with the burden of political liberty, the records investigated by Carsten suggest that in an earlier period a capacity to deal with the problem was not lacking. Not only in law-making, but in practical administration as well, the German rulers relied on their parliaments in a manner not much different than that so familiar in medieval England.

The very essentials of the turn toward modernity in Germany were found in techniques borrowed from the Estates by the princes. Thus many German states tended to evolve along institutional lines very much like those found elsewhere in western Europe. When looked at in this way the institutional development of Germany in the sixteenth century is simply a part of a larger movement. The "New Monarchies" in Germany — and Carsten accepts that concept as applicable to his own area of interest — were real enough, although they were far from absolute in the sixteenth century. The essence of the monarchical regime was simply the reduction of the forces of anarchy, an achievement

impossible without the aid of the constitutional principle represented by the Estates which had earlier appeared as just another divisive element in Imperial politics. Only after parliamentary assemblies gave proof that they could not maintain their position in the face of the crises of destructive warfare in the seventeenth century was absolutism possible in the Germanies. The resolution of medieval tensions in politics came only at the end of the confessional wars, when absolute monarchies, which by then were not new, overcame the dying constitutionalism of the representative assemblies.

In German principalities as in England and France, as well as in the Burgundian Netherlands, the sixteenth century appears as one of transition, a period in which medieval and modern concepts and forms of government jostle one another restlessly. "New monarchies" are indeed taking shape. But not apparently in the sense maintained by Pollard. If we turn to Sweden, which in the early sixteenth century was itself emerging from a catastrophic time of troubles, the already familiar contours of the problem achieve ever sharper definition.

The modern Swedish monarchy provides over one of the most advanced social democracies in the world. In few places can such an effective marriage of royal and parliamentary principles of government be found. Between our own day and the reforms of Gustavus Adolphus in the early seventeenth century, vigorous changes which capped the modern development took place. But even before that time there were currents of constitutionalism, of ideals and practices anticipatory of parliamentary monarchy. The historian of evolutionary beliefs would suspect that, even if he did not have the proof available.

Ingvar Andersson's *History of Sweden*, the work of a noted sixteenth century scholar and archivist, supplies the needed proof, while at the same time affording us further insights into the meaning of Pollard's terminology. As Dr. Andersson him-

self written, in the age of the sixteenth century king, Gustavus Vasa, "the ideas of the medieval world were in the melting pot." The discovery of America, Magellan's circumnavigation of the world, the theological discoveries of Martin Luther—these were developments that coincided with the efforts of Vasa to forge a unified national state in place of the great dream of a Nordic kingdom embracing Denmark and Norway as well as Sweden itself. Building on the work of Karl Knutson and the Stures, Vasa, as Gustav Eriksson of Rydholm came to be known, founded a "New Monarchy." But the road was not an easy one. Opposition came from some of the old nobility, loathe to surrender feudal prerogatives, as well as from the peasants, conservative by nature and uneasy about church reform. In order to gain wider acceptance for the many innovations planned in church and state, especially acquiescence in administrative reforms and the disposition of church property in the course of the Reformation, Vasa found it necessary to turn to the Swedish Estates, the *Riksdag* or assembly already possessed of a long-standing history of participation in government. Swamping aside the resistance of churchmen, provincial governors and the influence of the independent cities of the Hanseatic League, Vasa had by the early 1530's, with the aid of the *Riksdag*, established in Sweden a state quite like the one molded by Thomas Cromwell in England. It was a "New Monarchy" with a strong, centralized government.

In some respects Anderson found the break with the past to be complete. Yet in his narrative one cannot for very long escape the omnipresent *Riksdag*, itself a part of the medieval heritage and a bulwark of constitutional limits set to the authority of the newly crowned king. Between the Stures' dream of a strong nation-state, which Vasa was able to realize, and the idea of absolutism, which Vasa neither sought nor realized, there stood the representative institutions of the Swedes, another instance of the subtle way in which

the old and the new combined in the sixteenth century to make it neither medieval nor modern.

It is hard to avoid over-stating the importance of parliamentary bodies in the European political system of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries in a work focusing on the applicability of Pollard's thesis in the light of recent research and synthesis. Surely the role of such groups in the Netherlands and in England was strikingly different than it was in France, where the central Estates General suffered an early eclipse. Yet in France representative assemblies other than the Estates General continued to be important in the supposedly model despotism of the age. These and other points were ably made by Robert H. Lord in 1930, in a paper read at the annual meeting of the American Catholic Historical Association under the title, "The Parliaments of the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period." That work is presented as the final essay in part two of this book, chiefly because it argues effectively for a line of criticism subsequently developed by more recent critics of the Pollard-Mousnier thesis. Lord shows that the hallmark of sixteenth century monarchy conformed more often than not in power shared between the representatives of the politically active classes and the royal administration. To that sharing, Lord gave the name "quasi-constitutionalism." What such a wording lacks in felicity is amply compensated for by its very suggestiveness of the limitations faced by the "New Monarchies."

This sampling of the results of recent scholarship has by choice focused on a single aspect of the problem of the sixteenth century monarchies and their immediate fifteenth century roots. Equal concentration on other facets would doubtlessly uncover further ambiguities and difficulties inherent in Pollard's formula when applied on a European scale. Yet the primary query remains unanswered unless we can characterize these facts still studied by historians under old rubrics.

No easy answer springs to mind. Professors Mousnier and Hexter had all they could do in 1955 merely to catalogue the problems implicit in any consideration of absolutism, when they addressed an international congress of historians at Rome.^{*} This is not intended as a counsel of despair, however. Fortunately we can turn to the reconstructions attempted by J. Russell Major and J. H. Hexter, which, when taken together, seem to point a way for the next generation to follow.

It is perhaps not unfair to say that Major still values the term "New Monarchy" highly, though in a special sense: he wishes to preserve the view that the Renaissance, with which he associates the monarchies at issue, was an age of profound innovation. Hexter, on the other hand, is tired of orthodoxies and wants to start afresh, with a new vocabulary that tends to be as dialectical as that used by Pollard. His theses and antitheses are more subtle, surely, and they help us to find our way through a mass of data whose production increases at a nonlinear rate. Major and Hexter highlight a paradox implicit in the problem we are studying, a paradox that must be dealt with before bringing this essay to its close.

We live in an age beset with revolutionary tensions. Pollard lived and found his framework for historical thought in the late Victorian era, characteristically optimistic about the course of evolution. Yet he spoke of the revolutionary newness of the Renaissance monarchies. And it is just this point that seems to divide the syntheses of Hexter and Major. The former accuses Pollard of imposing a too evolutionary scheme of the data. Major, for his part, criticizes the details of Pollard's picture, but wishes to retain the essence of the Renaissance as marking a new era in human history, much in the fashion of Jacob Burckhardt. While each of our revisionists

insists that a new detailed vocabulary is needed, if we are ever to come to grips with the complex institutional changes of the period, there is between them an explicit disagreement about the lines of reconstruction. Both seem to reject the accidental features Pollard described as necessary parts of the "New Monarchy"; but each accepts the central notion of the essential newness of the period ca. 1450-1600. The business of working toward an adequate historical language with which to describe the balance of continuity and change thus looms as one of the great methodological challenges facing the next generation of historians.

The old formulas have come to play the part of a worn-out myth, a myth that once evoked thought and challenged the imagination but eventually grew stale and served to stifle further creative effort. No body will question that profound changes were taking place in the political institutions of Europe during the period under consideration here. Many will not question the utility of the term "New Monarchy" itself. But the myth represented by the great dialectic expressed in the dichotomy "medieval-modern" makes neither Major nor Hexter happy. The medieval-modern antithesis almost always suggests another that might be referred to as the "constitutionalism-absolutism" framework. Such pairs of terms run the risk of bringing the historian to rest on the precariously sharp point of his own dialectical knife.

That is not to say that the revisionists have not their positive side. The "New Monarchy," with all of its implications, does not seem a wholly perverse idea to them, if by that formula we indicate the efforts made by princes and kings to cope with the besetting problems of government that each state faced during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, although not always at the same moment in time. If we can abandon the habit of looking at the concept as marking the end of the medieval era, which view Pollard and his supporters seemed to espouse, and be-

^{*} "Quelques problèmes concernant le monarchisme absolu." *Relevés du X^e congrès international de science juridique* (Florence, 1955), IV, 1-55 (*Storia moderna*).

gin to treat the complex of ideas implied in the formula as nothing more than a descriptive framework within rough periodic limitations, then the "New Monarchy" ought to continue to stimulate the historians of future generations. In that way the historian, whose work is on the surface *conservative* of the past, can pour new

wine into a valuable and favored old bottle, while avoiding the uncomfortable sensations arising when one tests on a point valuable in logic but of dubious worth in the looking-glass of historical fact.

[note: all selections reprinted here omit the notes appearing in the original writings unless otherwise stated. All other notes are those supplied by the editor.]

The Conflict of Opinion

"The circumstances of which we have been speaking in connection with the New Monarchy were anything but favorable to the development of Parliamentary independence and prestige. Indeed, everywhere but in England Parliamentary institutions almost disappeared."

— ALFRED FREDERICK POLLARD

"The progress of the absolute monarchies was not caused solely by the desire of the kings to increase their power. . . . The theory of absolutism answered the dominant needs of the societies and a desire of the corps social. Finally, the new monarchies were a result of the rivalries of two classes, the nobility and the bourgeoisie. The king had need of the latter in financial affairs. . . ."

— ROLAND MOUSSIER

"The movements of the Tudor rule lay . . . in the thoroughness with which it was administered. Old institutions were investigated and adapted to new uses, while newer agencies followed the traditional pattern. . . . New policies were formulated, but ancient laws and traditional practices were observed. . . ."

— WALTER COPEL RICHARDSON

"Talk of a 'new monarchy' in the sixteenth century has become a little unfashionable of late. . . . But in some ways the reaction has gone too far in regards political and social structure, the sixteenth century produced something quite new in England. . . ."

— GEORGEY RUDOLPH ELTON

"As it appeared at the time of Philip the Good . . . the Burgundian State may be defined as a plurality of autonomous territories forming a monarchical unity. A certain equilibrium was established . . . between the local liberties and the princely power. Had it been free to develop itself at will, the latter would have arrived at absolutism. . . ."

— HENRI FROHM

" . . . The States General of the Netherlands maintained itself only in the seven northern provinces of the Burgundian dominions; but there its victory was so decisive that, at least formally, it displaced the monarchy altogether."

— HELMUT GOODE KORNHUBER

" . . . The popular, consultative nature of the monarchy continued unmodified for the first third of the period and was only mildly altered thereafter. . . . Francis I had 'neither the strength of mind nor the steadfastness of will to apply himself to a systematic transformation of society and institutions.'"

— J. RUSSELL MAJOR

they are in the pages of Shakespeare. Nor the Stuart's nor was Mag a Carta discovered and the best-loved instruments of Stuart tyranny were popular institutions under the Tudors. England in the sixteenth century put its trust in its princes far more than in its parliaments. It invested them with attributes almost divine; no one but a Tudor poet would ever have thought of the "Divinity that doth hedge a king"; or have written:—

Not all the water in the rough, made sea,
Can wash the balm off from an anointed king.

The breath of worldly men cannot depose
The deputy elected by the Lord.

"Love for the King," wrote a Victorian of Henry VIII in his early years, "is universal with all who see him, for his Highness does not seem a person of this world, but one descended from Heaven." The new Messiah is the king.

Such were the tendencies which the kings of the New Monarchy crystallized into practical weapons of absolute government. Royalty had become a caste apart. To them [the subjects] there was nothing strange in the union of Church and State and in the supremacy of the king over both. For, while they professed Christianity in various forms, the State was

their real religion, and the king was their Great High Priest. They were assumed with the idea that the State was the end and crown of human endeavour it was their god and their deity. It inspired them, and they became its slaves. The individualism of Tudor times, individual the liberty and conscience were as nothing compared with national interests. Nationalism was young, presumptuous, and arrogant, its passion had no patience with the theories of statesmen and its energy was only equalled by its ignorance. The New Monarchy was the emblem and the focus of these forces. It had a great and an important part to play in the making of modern France, its wasering aspirations and its idealism, its greatest achievement was that it made the reception of such an experiment superfluous for the future. Order is Heaven's first law; on earth it must always go before liberty. . . . Moral and political principles were the new and, as yet, untried experiment of ages and you can do more to see the New Monarchy by the principles it took than you can appreciate the canons by which you approve or condemn them. . . . The history of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is to imply that man stands to-day where he did then, and to ignore the progress of four hundred years.

VARIATIONS ON THE MAIN THEME

ROLAND MOUNIER

Professor Mounier was born in 1907. His entire academic life has been spent in research, writing and teaching connected with the period from ca. 1500-1750. His many distinguished contributions include his ground-breaking study *Le Vénérable*, a basic study of the connection between the sale of offices and the growth of royal government. In addition to numerous other books and articles, Mounier has been very active in the work of the International Congress of the History of Sciences.

THE CONDITIONS OF ABSOLUTE MONARCHY'S PROGRESS

In the sixteenth century the majority of the European States were turning towards absolute monarchy. Absolute monarchy represented a new political organization and a new possibility of political action as well as a new conception of sovereignty, the power to make laws, to impose tribute, to levy taxes, to maintain a permanent army, to appoint officials, to decide which institutions attacked the public welfare, and, in particular, against the royal authority, by virtue of his extraordinary prerogative, to remove from his position any official of the State. The idea of absolute monarchy was based on the old ideas of absolute authority and custom regulating the relations of kings with their vassals and their subjects. It does not contain the old ideas, but is tempered by them.

These great states were moreover activated and unified by a powerful patriotism, which mixed a vaguely defined local patriotism and with the feeling of duty toward the local sovereign. This broader patriotism, although very ancient, blossomed by virtue of great struggles, which created an awareness of common interests by the action of the royal officials as a result

of new economic relations; and, even more, because of the influence of the humanists on the courtiers and the great bourgeois leaders who gave a tone to society. Humanism gave to the sentiment which springs from the sentiment of duty, a political and from the sentiment of duty, a political and supplementary characteristics: clarity, precision, form. As a consequence, power increased. In France, the humanist Rabelais felt that his country was dominated by a tyrant, so that it was a prison, and he dedicated his creative life to his "Genie de la France."¹ The French humanists pronounced the superiority of France. Cuguin,² driven by love of his native land, his "mother" enumerated the virtues particularly French—chivalrous gallantry, the love of work and of thrift, a sweetness of life, gentleness of manners. Valeran de Valerannes³ demonstrated that

¹ Rabelais, *Le Livre de Pantagruel*, chap. 15, 16. It was a time of patriotism in France, although its subject matter was Roman history. In the same way is "the tutelary spirit of France" (Lafontaine).

² Jean Cuguin was, before the "genius" of the Parisian humanists by the French historian Mounier, obviously in reference to the fact that he was the General of the Order of Malchamps or Transilvania. He lived in France and was named in his Latin textbook history *De origine et sensu Francorum* (Compagnon, 1495). (Fagnier's note.)

³ The French humanist historian (Fagnier's note.)

they accepted it without serious resistance.

Charles the Bold (1467-1477) completed and at the same time endangered the work of his father.¹ He completed it in

1477, and Friesland, the acquisition of which was to make of the Zuider Zee a Burgundian lake. He endangered it on the other hand by the violence of his ambition, which, after having rendered all his subjects discontented, led him finally to the catastrophe of Nancy. There is nothing astonishing in the speedy outbreak of an almost unanimous reaction against the ducal rule. To be sure, the Burgundian provinces did not seek to separate from one another. The Great Privilege which they forced the heir of Charles the Bold to grant them in 1477 left their union unbroken. But by substituting for the power of the prince the power of the States General as the central authority of the union, they actually transformed the state into a confederation of numerous territories. It was too evident that such a confederation would have been incapable of defending itself against such an adversary as Louis XI, whose policy immediately after Nancy aimed at the complete ruin of the house of Burgundy. And so, scarcely had Maximilian of Austria married Mary of Burgundy when he is found denouncing Louis XI energetically to the restoration of the monarchical regime set up by his predecessors. From 1477 to 1493, he

repeatedly renounced the territorial particularism openly attacked by France, which used against him the suspicions bred by the fact that he was a foreigner. But when with Philip the Fair (1493-1506) a natural prince again mounted the throne, the long ground was at once regained. The princely prerogatives were again in force, the great central institutions of the state were restored, and the States General, instead of performing in their role of systematic opposition, henceforth co-operated with the sovereign. It is from this time forward that

the Burgundian rule became popular in the Netherlands, and sent down, so to speak, far-reaching roots. The great nobles, part of whom, under Maximilian, had taken

themselves in a body about him, entered his councils and shared the highest offices of the state, the maintenance of which became the indispensable condition of the prestige which they enjoyed.

At the time when the disposition to pursue the projects of Charles the Bold and of Maximilian with regard to Guelders and Friesland. His reign, eminently pacific, went no further than the strengthening of the union between the old provinces, and saw the accomplishment of no conquests. But Charles V was to complete the aspirations which constituted, after 1543, the union of the seventeen provinces. He won Tournai from France in 1521, acquired Friesland in 1523, Overijssel and Utrecht in 1528, Groningen in 1536, and finally Guelders in 1543. Henceforth the Burgundian state was complete, and would receive no further aggrandizement.

like those brought about by Louis XI, were all accomplished.

The very energetic resistance which he had to overcome, and which was directed almost continually by the famous Duke Charles of Guelders, is not fully explained by the energetic intervention of Francis I in the affairs of the Netherlands, to understand

which the emperor had had, until the

time of Charles V, been close with the old Burgundian provinces than those which had existed between the latter since the early Middle Ages. Guelders was more German than Netherlandish. As for Friesland and its dependencies, where dwelt a population as different in its speech as in its state

of mind, it had struggled energetically from the first against the attempts at annexation. These attempts,

which were finally successful under Charles V, proved that his conquests on the right bank of the Zuider Zee and the Yssel were something more than the results of his ambition. To complete the building of the Netherlands and assure their security it was indispensable that they should be round on all sides the inland sea which indented them on the North and that they should absorb the duchy of Guelders, the part of which, advancing between the Meuse and the Wal, menaced at the same time Utrecht, Holland and Brabant. Charles V, in uniting them to the territories of the west, did no more, as we have seen above, than take his inspiration from a plan already completely outlined in the reign of Charles the Bold.

This assemblage of seventeen provinces, then, half Romance and half Germanic which constituted the Burgundian state at its completion, was composed of two clearly distinct groups of territories. The first, lying in the basin of the Meuse and the Scheldt and extending along the North Sea west of the Zuider Zee, was formed during the reign of Philip the Good, by virtue of a long historic evolution and without encountering serious opposition, except in the territory of Liège, which resumed its old moorings in 1477 and retained it until the end of the eighteenth century. The second, on the contrary, a necessary aggrandizement of the Burgundian possessions, was the result of a war of conquest, and was built up only by means of violent annexations. Still, once accomplished these annexations were permanent. The advantages which they found in their union with the Burgundian state soon reconciled the populations which had struggled with the greatest energy against it. Thenceforth they no longer sought a separation. It is true that they always played a less active part than the old provinces in the political life of the state, and it was only toward the end of the sixteenth century that the constitution of the Republic of the United Provinces attached them indivisibly to the territories of the west.

At the same time that the Burgundian state was forming by the union of the territories of the Netherlands under the authority of a single dynasty, it finally severed the ties, already loosened, which still bound it to France and Germany. Already in 1435, by the peace of Arras, Philip the Good had secured from Charles VII release from his position as vassal of the crown. On the other hand, he neglected to pay homage to the emperor for his Lotharingian lands, so that he appeared in reality as an independent monarch. The memory of the ancient kingdom of Lothaire certainly haunted his mind and the words of its principal companions, and inspired him with the ambition to obtain in his turn a royal title. In 1477, Charles was for an instant on the point of realizing this project, which would have set the final seal on the sovereignty of his house, and if after him there was no longer

serious question of raising the Netherlands to the rank of a kingdom, the political autonomy of the country none the less continued to gain strength. Under Charles V the treaties of Madrid and Cambrai rendered perpetual the concession granted by Charles VII to Philip the Good, the dependence on France was forever abolished in Artois and in Flanders, the Scheldt finally ceased to mark on the map a political frontier. It might seem at first sight that this advantage wrung by the Emperor from his adversary would be of profit to the Empire. This was not the case. Charles V acted in the Netherlands as the successor of the dukes of Burgundy, and his power only served to make definitive their separation from Germany. The convention of Augsburg (1548) established them, under the name of Circle of Burgundy, as an independent state. If its appearance, it recognized them still as an integral part of the Empire, in reality it detached them from it for it accorded them, in all its essential features, the attributes of sovereignty. Thus ended, under the great-grandson of Charles the Bold, the long historical process whose principal phases we have endeavored to sketch. The double move-

¹ Philip the Good, 1419-1467 (Edin's note).

ment begun in the tenth century had come to an end; the provinces of the Netherlands were no longer bound together by any common law. By the end of the fifteenth century, however, the bond that bound together the seventeen provinces was securely tied, it broke at the end of the sixteenth century in the revolution against Spain and the religious revolution.

An agglomeration of principalities long independent of one another, the Burgundian state was not a union of states on the principle of personal union. Even on the principle of the different territories given to a prince by his father, the duke was not a sovereign. Instead of bearing a single title, like a king, he was clothed with a multitude of special titles. He was at the same time duke of Brabant, count of Flanders, count of Hainaut, count of Holland, etc., etc. In no way beneath his scepter, the Burgundian state preserved its ancient constitution, its special laws, its customs. It is more heterogeneous, not less so, than the kingdom of France. It is an amalgamation of small states, in each one of which the common prince ruled only as the successor of the former local prince. But this is not the only aspect of the matter. From the personal union of the provinces, a certain unity of government resulted. The dukes, who that of all the princes of the time, were the most powerful, sought in a double manner to augment their influence at the expense of the local government and of the privileges which their various lords had obtained from their princes: first, by strengthening their own authority, second, by establishing, with a view to the general administration and above the greater number of local governments, a certain number of central institutions. As it appeared as the name of Philip the Good, and as it remained under Charles V., at the time of its fullest development, the Burgundian state may be de-

fined as a plurality of autonomous territories forming a monarchical unity. A certain equilibrium was established by the force of things between the local liberties and the central authority. The latter arrived at absolutism, but it had to take into account, from the very first, an opposition that it was unable to overcome. In each province it was obliged in respect to the old laws and customs to make concessions, while reaching medieval particularism with a few steps.

This political centralization was, moreover, favored by the social and economic changes which characterized the fifteenth century. It would be quite unjust to consider it as exclusively the work of the dynasty and inspired by its interests alone. In point of fact the princely interest was in many respects intimately allied with the general interest. The nascent capitalism, developing along with it, suffered from the privileges bequeathed by the Middle Ages. The bourgeoisie, which was beginning to assert itself, found itself in a position of disadvantage. The dukes, on the other hand, were the only ones who could protect it. The bourgeoisie, therefore, supported the centralization of power. The dukes, in turn, were obliged to make concessions to the bourgeoisie in order to obtain its support. This was the case in the Netherlands, where the bourgeoisie was particularly powerful. The dukes, therefore, were obliged to make concessions to the bourgeoisie in order to obtain its support. This was the case in the Netherlands, where the bourgeoisie was particularly powerful. The dukes, therefore, were obliged to make concessions to the bourgeoisie in order to obtain its support. This was the case in the Netherlands, where the bourgeoisie was particularly powerful.

ing is more characteristic on this point than the case of economic exclusiveness, which was hand in hand with resistance to the progress of political and innovative spirit which inspired the full ally of the ducal government. In short, the more a city had been privileged in the Middle Ages, the more it resisted the new regime, and therefore there is nothing astonishing in the fact that it is especially in Flanders, where the cities, during earlier centuries, had surpassed those of all other territories in freedom and influence, that the Burgundian policy found its most resolute opponents. But the resistance of Flanders was inspired by the past and not by the future. They did not see in their power to resist the establishment of the new regime. In the Netherlands, displacement of the economic equilibrium, and that the common interest was in the point of view of the house of Burgundy into the provincial and local interests. It is of the times, that before the establishment of the new regime, the dukes were obliged to make concessions to the bourgeoisie in order to obtain its support. This was the case in the Netherlands, where the bourgeoisie was particularly powerful. The dukes, therefore, were obliged to make concessions to the bourgeoisie in order to obtain its support. This was the case in the Netherlands, where the bourgeoisie was particularly powerful.

were introduced into the other provinces as they passed under Burgundian sway. Everywhere they led as results the substitution of educated magistrates for the communal aldermen (*échevins*), the restriction of superannuated privileges to the advantage of the "common good," the disappearance from the law of a multitude of archaic practices, the organization of the practice of appeal, the organization of the pursuit of criminals, etc. The chambers of accounts brought the administration of the finances to a regular accountability, exercised a permanent control over the receipts and expenses of all officials, and allowed alterations in the distribution of the taxes, rendering them more equitable. In consequence of this, the reputation for excellence that it enjoyed, and of this there is no need of other proof than the fact that it served as a model to Maximilian for the reforms he introduced into Austria. It was natural, it is from France, where the monarchical government was from the thirteenth century on so thoroughly developed, that the dukes borrowed a large part of their administrative system. They were far from simply copying the institutions of that kingdom. On the contrary, they altered them considerably to adapt them to the conditions of their own period, and this was the case in the Netherlands. The assistants became less and less necessary in proportion as a new system of administration was introduced. They had become completely discredited by the second half of the fifteenth century. We have said above that the establishment of monarchical institutions did not go on without arousing protest and, at least in the Netherlands, the cities had acquired a dominant influence, and the policy of centralization found itself consequently more or less openly at odds with the urban policy.

its successes were short-lived, on these occasions, it remained a potential centre of opposition to the monarch. In these circumstances of power in the state, and while its members might, for long years, remain almost unaware of this, it was never entirely forgotten, least of all by the monarch.

The States General of the Burgundian Netherlands *de par lesquels* is to be called the Netherlands, had no definite date of birth. Each of the provinces which the house of Burgundy added successively to its possessions had its own provincial estates with its own well-established powers and traditions. In 1410, Philip the Good summoned the estates of Brabant, Flanders and Holland to a joint assembly at Malines in order to discuss the high price of English wool, a question in which all three provinces were vitally interested. Following repeated requests by the towns of Brabant, Flanders, Holland and Zealand, the duke summoned another joint assembly of the towns of these provinces at Ghent, in 1434, to discuss English competition in the cloth industry. There followed further assemblies in which varying groups of provinces were summoned to deal with problems of trade, the reform of the coinage or other matters which concerned more than one of the provinces under the duke's rule. In the history of these assemblies there is no evidence that Philip the Good deliberately set out to

to give greater unity to his dominions. The joint assemblies were summoned because it suited all parties concerned to discuss specific common problems in this way, and these problems were nearly all questions of economic policy. At no time during his reign did Philip ask these joint assemblies for financial help—he did, of course, ask for *aides*, or *bedes*, from the separate provincial assemblies—and not until the reign of Charles the Bold did they appear on the agenda. Only thirteen years after the death of Charles the Bold in 1477, the States General acted not only as a recognised and self-conscious

body, but also as the main instrument of the monarch's policy in the Netherlands.

For much of the rest of the fifteenth century, the States General remained many of the characteristics of a largely feudal assembly. Although through the sixteenth century it retained primarily an assembly of the delegates of provincial estates, reflecting the varying composition and interests of these latter bodies and especially their parts.

The Estates General of the provinces, was generally represented in its provincial estates by its four members, the cities of Ghent, Bruges, Ypres and the Franc of Bruges, the important towns where political control was largely in the hands of the lower nobility. In Holland the voice of the six large towns, Dordrecht, Amsterdam, Haarlem, Leiden, Delft and Gouda, was equally overwhelming. The nobles had only one vote against their six, and the clergy had long since ceased to sit.

The Estates were represented but, especially in matters of taxation, the consent of the towns was most important for the monarch, and most difficult to obtain. For the towns, unlike the nobility, could not shift the burden of taxation. Brabant always the four capitals: Brussels, Louvain, Antwerp and Bois-le-Duc.

The representatives who attended the meetings of the provincial estates were, in fact, little more than delegates of the towns who sent them to the assemblies, who paid their salaries and expenses and whose instructions they had strictly to follow. The Estates General, however, was not a purely feudal assembly. The provinces of Holland, Zealand, Flanders, Brabant, Malines, Namur, Lille-Douai, Orthes, Artois, Tour-

nais, Tournais and Hainaut with Valenciennes. The two problems, that of the membership of the States General and of the powers of the delegates, were both aspects of a more fundamental problem: the divergence of interests between ruler and subject. It was the aim of successive Burgundian and Habsburg rulers of the Netherlands to weld their dominions together into a greater political unity and to provide them with more efficient and powerful government. Against these centralising tendencies, however, there were two powerful forces at work. The first was the traditional loyalty of the nobles to their lords, and the second was the traditional loyalty of the towns to their lords. The nobles, on the one hand, were opposed to the centralising tendencies of the monarch, and the towns, on the other, were opposed to the centralising tendencies of the nobles. The nobles had only one vote against their six, and the clergy had long since ceased to sit. The meetings of the States General therefore had the appearance of a congress of delegates from quasi-autonomous powers, rather than that of an institution representing the monarch. The Estates General, however, was not a purely feudal assembly. The provinces of Holland, Zealand, Flanders, Brabant, Malines, Namur, Lille-Douai, Orthes, Artois, Tour-

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everywhere attend the diets, for example. In many other principalities they disappeared as an Estate with the introduction of the Reformation. Some Protestant principalities, however, such as the duchy of Württemberg, retained a clerical Estate. In others, such as the landgraviate of Hesse or the electorate of Saxony a substitute was found in granting representation in pious foundations, hospitals, schools, and universities, so that the pattern of three Estates was preserved. In other principalities only two Estates were left, and these also predominated elsewhere: the nobility and the towns. The nobility sometimes were divided into the higher and the lower nobility: the former comprising counts and lords, the latter the much more numerous knights and owners of noble estates, who were commoners. In most principalities all noblemen who fulfilled certain qualifications with regard to birth and property had the right to attend the diet. In the duchy of Prussia, and later also in the landgraviate of Hesse-Cassel, the noblemen first met in primary assemblies to elect their deputies to the diet. In many parts of southern Germany, however—in Baden, Württemberg, the Palatinate, Bamberg, Trier, and in certain smaller principalities of Swabia and Franconia—the nobility in the early fifteenth century ordered in gaining the status of Free Imperial Knights and thus disappeared from the diets, which henceforth were attended only by the towns.

Usually all the towns, including small market-towns, were summoned to the diet. But on the lower Rhine this right came to be vested in a few "principal towns" only and in the duchy of Prussia the one important town, Königsberg, remained separate from the small towns, exactly as did Rostock and Wismar in the duchy of Mecklenburg. As the more important towns rose to the rank of Free Imperial Cities, the small territorial towns could not rival the influence of the nobility which throughout remained the leading Estate. The excep-

tions were those principalities where the noblemen became Free Imperial Knights, but in the duchy of Cleves too the towns became more important than the nobility. Most of the territorial towns, however, were declining, either already as a result of the Thirty Years War. Thus the towns were not only the backbone of the estates as well as politically throughout the Empire and in the whole of central and eastern Germany, but they were also the backbone of the estates and the Estates of the German towns of Germany only one in the tenth century, and that was Leipzig, but

The peasants were only represented in the diet as an exception, above all in frontier areas close to Switzerland and the Netherlands. In Tyrol and Vorarlberg both Habsburg possessions, in the nearby abbey of Reichenau and the archbishopric of Salzburg, in the margraviate of Baden in the counties of Friaul and of Milan on the North Sea. In several of these principalities the nobility did not attend the diets. In others, such as Württemberg and the Palatinate, the circumstance that the peasants were theoretically represented was indicated by the fact that the urban deputies sat simultaneously for the owners and the tenants, the manor districts around the towns. In Cleves and Mark, as well as in the duchy of Prussia, representatives of the peasants participated in the local assemblies which preceded or followed the diets. There the deputies were elected, or rendered their accounts, the business of the diets was discussed and concluded, the

taxes were repartitioned, and matters of local government considered.

Thus the number as well as the composition of the Estates varied greatly from territory to territory. If the original pattern was the same as in France and other continental countries and contained three Estates, and accordingly three separate houses, this pattern was modified to such an extent in practice that it is almost impossible to say what was the rule and what the exception. In most of the lay principalities the nobility, and next to them the towns, formed the backbone of the Estates, and this corresponded to the reality of the ancien régime. But it also proved a barrier to a progressive constitutional development when the social reality began to change and the nobility began to lose its importance. The composition of the Württemberg Estates was exceptional, not because the nobility no longer was an Estate of the duchy—that was the same elsewhere in southwestern Germany—but because of the presence of Protestant prelates who sat together with the urban deputies, which gave to the Estates a uniserial character. The ground of the two Estates gave to them a coherence and a unity which were absent elsewhere. The friction which generally prevailed between the nobility and the towns was an element of weakness, which could easily be used to play off one Estate against the other and might enable an ambitious prince to curtail the power of the Estates altogether.

Broadly speaking, Estates developed everywhere in Germany in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries for two reasons. One was financial: the princes' revenues from lands, jurisdictions, tolls, mines, and other regular shares owing to wars, economic difficulties, and the declining value of money so that many lands and rights had to be pawned or sold. This, however, merely aggravated the problem, for it diminished the prince's own revenues further and further and they were correspondingly less and less able "to live of their own."

Hence they had to seek the aid of their subjects and to reach an agreement with the nobility or the towns about the terms on which they would be willing to render such aid. A famous example of such an agreement concluded at a very early time was the treaty of 1283 between the margraves of Brandenburg and their vassals about the tax of the *Heile or precaria*, according to which the margraves sold the tax to their subjects against a fixed annual due from land and property, and promised that they would not ask them for another tax in future, unless in two definite and specified exceptional cases. Yet this was only a temporary solution, for in the course of time the new fixed due was also sold or paid off and the princes were more than ever unable to meet their growing expenses and to pay their debts. In their own interest a more permanent arrangement was necessary. They could have continued to negotiate with individuals, with cities, or with the nobility, but they found it much more convenient to negotiate with "the country" as a whole and this was the origin of the Estates as an institution, as a corporation representing the whole country. Soon they granted taxes to their prince but only against certain conditions. The object of elaborate bargaining. Soon the diet became the only place where such taxes could legally be granted, or at least this was the case in the opinion of the Estates.

The other factor which created the Estates as an institution was the end and succession of internal conflicts, fratricidal wars, and partitions of territory between brothers and cousins of the ruling family, which filled the fifteenth century in particular. In such conflicts and civil wars either side had to attempt to win the support of the "country" without which they were helpless. Frequently the Estates were called upon to act as arbiters, to carry through or to guarantee a treaty or settlement, or a partition, or to provide the regency council which was to rule on be-

other men which the Estates possessed in contrast with their rulers' "foreign" officials. All the appointments, however, soon became vested in the Estates' committees which also elected their own new members, with or without the confirmation of the prince, so that the whole structure assumed the aspect of a narrow oligarchy dominated by some leading families. It is certainly true that the Estates—whether the Junkers of the east or the burghers of Württemberg—acted in the interests of the class which they represented, that their power was narrow, and that they did not stand for liberty in the modern sense of the term. Still, in defending their rights against the prince, in opposing their rulers' arbitrary matters of trade or against princely monopolies, they often defended the true interests of the country against the prince and his officials. In complaining about heavy taxes and carrying services and the great damage caused by deer and other wild animals they championed the interests of the peasants. In opposing forcible recruiting and too heavy military burdens they prevented some of the worst excesses of princely despotism. Neither can it truly be maintained that the Estates were not willing to undertake permanent duties, nor that they

where they pre-
capitulated the Es-
the first indirect taxes in place of the anti-
quated and low-yielding direct taxes. The
mixed "deputations" of Württemberg asso-
ciated the Estates with the new organs of
administration and thus provided a link
between them and the state. Many mem-
bers of the Estates served the state wil-
lingly and their grants were often very
liberal.

These remarks also show that another
common criticism of the Estates is not
really justified: that they did not create
anything new, but had an entirely nega-

tion. That Professor Hartung in
his standard constitutional history of the
many wrote only a few years ago

The Estates resisted taxation and wrongs
imposed by the prince, but they did not
think of permanently influencing the gov-
ernment, they were the defenders of medieval
arbitrariness.

With regard to Württemberg and the
prince he goes even further and declares:
There is no doubt that this absolutist
tendency, the references to the changed
situation, the departure from the letter of the
old law, were justified.

In other words, the tendency to deni-
grate the German Estates and to side with
the prince, who tried to suppress them,
has always been so pronounced that fifty
years ago a German historian exclaimed:
The Estates were the side of the absolute state against
the Estates. But his voice has re-
mained a cry in the wilderness. Recently,
however, Professor Hartung has admitted
that the Estates "formed, through their
mere existence, a counter-weight to abso-
lute government and therewith kept alive
of the nineteenth century was able to link
up with this inheritance, most clearly and
most directly in Württemberg.

Surely, this consideration alone ought to
lead to a revision of the one-sided attitude
towards the Estates. It is no accident,
surely, that the liberal movement of the
nineteenth century was strongest in those

areas of Germany where the Estates sur-
vived. Not only the idea of liberty, but the prin-
ciple of self-government were kept alive
by the Estates, as the Freiherr vom Stein
so clearly perceived in Cleves and Mark.
That this tradition did not die out in Ger-
many was due to the Estates. The Estates
of the Jesuits in favour of the prince.
So, fifty years later were the Estates
of the Thirty Years War.

From a position of great strength which
they occupied in the sixteenth century
most of the German Estates declined in the
seventeenth century. Indeed as we have
seen, the Estates of Bavaria already in the
sixteenth century. The causes of this rapid
decline, especially in the later seventeenth
century, have been discussed by many his-
torians. The growth of princely power has
been attributed to the adoption of princely
signature and the extension of the many
petitions, which in the fifteenth century
played into the hands of the Estates. Yet
the hundred and fifty years after the adop-
tion of the *Despotism Achilles* in Branden-
burg were the period of the Estates' great-
est power and in Württemberg there fol-
lowed upon the acceptance of the same
principle the deposition of Duke Eberhard
and the treaty of Tübingen, and then the
consolidation of the Estates' influence in
the second half of the sixteenth century.
With the exception of Bavaria and Hesse
a similar consolidation occurred at the

disposals of another argument which has
often been put forward: that the growth
of princely power was due to the adop-
tion, the new position of the Protestant
prince as the successor of the bishop of his
land and the secularization of his

The Estates of the Thirty Years War
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the dissolution of the monasteries. But the
German princes benefited but little from
the spoliation of the Church. On the other
hand, the dukes of Bavaria and Saxony, on
the other hand, was connected with the
advance of the Counter Reformation, the
financial and political backing the dukes
were given by the clergy, and the
of the Jesuits in favour of the prince.
So, fifty years later were the Estates
of the Thirty Years War.

The Thirty Years War certainly marked
a decisive change in the fortunes of the
Estates in many German territories. But
as we have seen, in Cleves and Mark,
Hesse-Cassel, Saxony and Württemberg
the Estates' influence actually increased as
a result of the war. Only where their
leaders were Protestants, and the prince
Catholic, did the military victories of the
Counter Reformation result in a defeat
of the Estates and their prince of religious
unity. Elsewhere the issue was much more
complex. Nor can it be maintained that
after 1648 the Estates were "rattling from
inwardly" that there was
no need to defeat them, that they withered
away without any great effort on the part
of the prince, and that sharp conflicts be-
tween prince and Estates only occurred as
an exception. The preceding pages and the
sharp clashes which occurred in Branden-
burg and Prussia provide ample proof that
this was not the case. Even in the Hesse-
burg territories the Estates, in spite of their
defeat in the Thirty Years War, showed a
surprising tenacity and survived into the
late eighteenth century.

As a result of the Thirty Years War and
of the wars against Louis XIV. standing
armies came into being in many parts of
Germany.

Drawn into the struggles for power,
often against their will, many German
princes sought to imitate the example of
the most powerful king in Europe, who

tant historical functions. Their traditions remained alive, especially in the southwest of Germany. Their opposition may not have been very effective, but it existed nevertheless. They preserved the spirit of constitutional government and liberty in the age of absolute monarchy. In many principalities they showed great vitality even in the eighteenth century. A new spirit began to permeate them with the coming of the French Revolution and the penetration of French ideas of liberty and equality. For these reasons alone the Estates deserve an honored place in German history. They did not reach the great eminence of the English Parliament or of the Dutch Estates. But in many principalities they retained their influence much

longer than the representative institutions in the Empire. In some principalities, especially those of Lower and Upper Saxony, they had not only a right to elect the King, but also to elect the Emperor with the Council Electors of Brandenburg. They elected the King of the principalities of the southern states, and the maintenance of the general peace and with several exceptions of the ages of Wenden, and of Saxony, of the Duchy of Pomerania, and of other German principalities. One of the country of many different principalities of them, and not the least important, was kept alive by the strenuous opposition of the Estates to the principles of absolute government.

important consequences. The "honorable council" which governed the town was naturally anxious that the capital it had elected should be in a position to be firmly guaranteed. This was impossible however until Sweden possessed a settled and recognized government, and that meant, in effect, a king. A *Riksdag*, attended by delegates from Lübeck, met in Strängnäs at Whitsonide 1523, and Gustav Eriksson Vasa was elected King of Sweden. The Lübeck councillors were placed at the right hand of the new King, and the relations to the Cathedral and shortly afterwards Gustav Vasa and his Council (which had now been reconstructed) gained certain very favourable trading rights in Lübeck and its allies. The Hanse merchants had thus proved successful in their speculation and they no doubt had a good reason to be so, and in the young King a willing tool.

The Danes had already evacuated Ålborg before the election of Gustav Vasa, and within a few weeks he controlled the capital. On Midsummer Day he rode through the south gate into the sorely ravaged Stockholm, where he was received and admitted with great ceremony, with joy and circumstance, as was met. At the beginning of July Kalmar Castle was rendered to one of Gustav Vasa's principal commanders, the German nobleman Eric van Meien, and in due course Finland, too, was conquered. Relations of a kind were established with Denmark and the Emperor. Frederick, Sweden was expelled in her attempt to conquer Gotland. The frontier provinces that Sweden had annexed: the last to go was Bohuslän, which Gustav Vasa retained until the beginning of the 1530's.

Notwithstanding all that had been achieved, however, the anxiety of the throne was more apparent than real. The strength of Gustav Vasa's position in Sweden depended primarily on the willing support of the various localities, and this could not always be relied upon. The pol-

itics of the Stures had favoured licence and brutality in the countryside and the towns which had supported Gustav Vasa might easily be deflected by a change of circumstances or mood. Again, the King had achieved his position with the support of the Sture party, and that party might well hold the view that, in ascending the throne and accepting the help of Lübeck, he had usurped the place which belonged by right to one of Sten Sture's young sons. Equally unpredictable was the attitude of the nobles and the Church, both of them forces over and above the provincial authorities. Nor was the King's task made any easier by the fact that he had to deal with a kingdom where inheritance to Lübeck, especially as he had inherited from his predecessors in the late Middle Ages the problem of making both ends meet in his treasury. Consequently the first few decades of Gustav Vasa's rule were a period of recurring crises which, with their intrigues, their violence, and their treachery vividly illustrated the methods of the Renaissance era.

The first crisis was precipitated by discontent among the old adherents of the Sture party. Peder Jakobsson Sunninvader, possibly Sten Sture's chief adviser, was again in Sweden, and it was not long before he had fallen foul of the King. Early in 1524 Sten's widow, Christina Gyllenstierna, returned from captivity in Denmark, eager to recover the political position of the Stures. Her first husband, Nörby Christian II's last faithful follower in Scandinavia, she intrigued against the man who had ousted her sons from the position she had hoped would be theirs. The fractious population of Bohuslän were discontented with the King's policy, the shortage of salt, and these grievances were fully exploited by Peder Sunninvader, Christina Gyllenstierna, and several of Sten's former retainers. The king was also causing dissatisfaction by his apparent interest, exaggerated by rumour in the new and disturbing doctrines preached by the Lutheran reformers, principally the

THE "NEW MONARCHY" IN SWEDEN

CARL INGVAR ANDERSSON

Dr. Andersson has in 1929 been elected to the position of Professor of History in the University of Lund. He has been a member of the Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities since 1924. He has published several books on Swedish history, culminating in his *Enkelt XIV* a recognized classic of Swedish historical writing.

THE NEW MONARCHY IN SWEDEN was now in a fair way to accomplishing what the Stures had so often attempted but only partially achieved. Taking advantage of the circumstances, notably the support of the Lübeck

Ståne, ruling for a period over the first of the new provinces of Sweden, the provinces of Skåne, Småland, and Ålvsborg, were still in a state of anarchy. The country was largely controlled by Christian's supporters. The king's army was small and the ships and money from Lübeck would soon enable the Regent to win the rest of the kingdom.

The help given by Lübeck had certain

velopment of Europe as a whole, and not simply a set of generalizations based on the history of three or four of the larger countries. But no such comparative study has ever been made. From the lack of it many misconceptions have arisen: e.g., that the English Parliament was in nearly every respect unique, or that England was the only country in Europe that developed a vigorous and effective parliamentary system, or that England alone preserved its parliament uninterruptedly from the Middle Ages down to the nineteenth century.

In a paper like this it is obviously impossible to enter into any detailed treatment of so vast a field. But since no one has yet undertaken to present even a brief comparative survey of the whole group of European parliaments of that age, from Edinburgh and Lisbon to Moscow, perhaps it may be of interest to make that attempt here.

The assemblies in question went by various names: "Parliament," in England, Ireland, Scotland, Sicily, Naples, and the Papal States, and (for certain special assemblies) in Aragon, Catalonia, and Valencia (in Spanish and Italian "Parlamento"); "Cortes" for the ordinary parliaments of Portugal and the Spanish kingdoms; "States General" and "Provincial Estates" in France and the Netherlands; "Stati" in Piedmont, but "Congregazioni generali" for the estates representing the

Savoy, Habsburg in the Holy Roman Empire, and "Landtag" in the German territories. Many other names were used.

Not infrequently, as in Norway, Denmark, and Sweden, the assemblies were called "Riksdag" or "Rikssting," literally, "Assembly of the Realm" ("assembly of the land") in Hungary and Russia — although for all the parliaments of Central and Northern Europe the custom of our language is to call them "parliaments."

It is possible to study the evolution of that stage of social evolution when, amid the disintegration of the old feudal order, a new building up a more unified and more

highly organized national or territorial state but not yet strong enough to be liked autocratically. It was a period of enlisting the masses into the new social classes of the bourgeoisie.

When the nobles, no longer able to rule as a class, ended in their localities, might still hope by corporate organization and collective action to wield a large power over the common people. At the same time, a vigorous new social class had come into being, and was beginning to defend and often with ambitions to have a voice in public affairs equal to that of the nobles.

The process was slow and uneven. In some countries, like England, it was rapid and complete. In others, like France, it was slow and incomplete. In still others, like Spain, it was almost nonexistent. The process was also uneven within each country. In some, like England, the process was rapid and complete. In others, like France, it was slow and incomplete. In still others, like Spain, it was almost nonexistent.

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For some time, indeed, an alternative procedure, though open to many objections, was suggested. It was the procedure of the "third estate" was, indeed, the decisive step in the transformation of the older

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procedure, though open to many objections. It was the procedure of the "third estate" was, indeed, the decisive step in the transformation of the older

through the estates or with the crown to draft responses, petitions, or legislation, to require secrecy, or judicial business. Some parliaments came near to substituting their functions into the hands of a committee. In Naples, for instance, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the *Parlamento Generale* did little save to vote the subsidies and then elect a committee called the *Parlamento-Senato*, which attended to nearly all other business. Still more important was the famous committee in Scotland called the "Lords of the Articles," which from the later fourteenth to the seventeenth century almost replaced the national assembly, at times even legislating and levying taxes quite independently. As late as the reign of Charles I, the Scots Parliament was wont to meet only twice in a session the first time to choose the Lords of the Articles, and the second to sanction what they had done. And in various German states in the later period full meetings of the Diet virtually ceased to be held, being replaced by committees of the estates (*Ausschüsse*). Finally one may note the custom of electing a committee which, during the intervals between parliamentary sessions, was to watch over the liberties of the estates, or the execution of decrees or laws made in parliament, or to carry on various practical, administrative, or financial tasks that parliament had assumed. In the eastern Spanish kingdoms, in certain French provinces like Languedoc or Brittany, in Naples and Sicily, in German states, these standing committees, *Deputations*, were important elements in the political life of the period. Frequent or irregular meetings of parliament and subjecting the crown to a considerable measure of supervision and control.

Medieval assemblies usually ended, as they began, with a joint session of all the estates in the presence of the prince or his

representatives. In some lands like France, after wringing taxes out of the deputies, being chiefly anxious to send them home at once without listening to their grievances. But in many countries the final session had the utmost importance. It was then and then alone that parliament effectually transacted business. For the custom has arisen that none of the agreements previously reached during the assembly should be regarded as definitive until at the end all of them—the concessions made by the estates to the crown and the concessions made by the crown to the estates—were gathered up into one great final act, which, after being solemnly sanctioned by crown and estates alike at the final session, acquired binding force. This system of "final acts," "articles,"

they might be called, is found in Scotland, Aragon, Catalonia, Valencia, Sicily, all the German Diets, Sweden, Bohemia, Hungary, and Poland. As a technical term, a grant of taxes dependent upon the consent of the estates, it is not new, but its disadvantages are obvious, particularly the fact that if a parliament broke up without coming to a "final act," all the previous work of the session went for nothing. At any rate, such compact between crown and estates, almost like treaties between independent sovereigns, illustrate the dualistic conception of the state that underlies the parliamentarism of this period in its more developed forms.

It was bounded by no systematic constitutions of the modern sort. The estates almost everywhere did, indeed, at one time or another wring from their rulers written recognition of their rights and their inalienable sphere of activity. But, as bot-

tom everything depended on the ever-varying political situation and the ever-shifting balance of power as between the crown and the estates. Wherever the crown felt strong it was prone to forget, to deny, or to neglect its obligations. No matter whether they were based on custom or on sacred charters. A monarch might be weak, or a minor, or badly in debt, or the land in a great crisis, the estates in their turn were likely to take the bit in their teeth to extend their scope almost without limits, or even virtually to sequester the government. When the crown was up, parliament was down, and vice versa—that is the most general rule that can be laid down in the matter.

The most constant and important activity of the estates was the granting of taxes. *Landtag* and *Cortes*—that German name might have been applied to nearly all these parliaments. Almost everywhere (save in Russia, Denmark, and Norway), the principle came to be recognized that, without the consent of the estates, no revenues, no taxes could be imposed without the consent of the estates. It was by no means universal, but it was everywhere.

Of a high degree of power and indisputability. And it may be said that in most countries the sole right of the estates to grant taxes was, on the whole, well maintained down to the seventeenth century. There is, however, the well-known exception of France, where the *States-General* lost this power from 1440 on, and the Provincial Estates, from about the same period, could do little more than debate how taxes that could not be escaped might best be paid.

The sphere of parliamentary activity was in legislation. As these assemblies had no influence in the executive, they had no power to propose or to pass laws, or to amend existing laws, or to appoint or remove judges, or to create or abolish offices, or to exercise any other of the functions that in modern times are reserved to the executive and the judiciary. The

a great deal of royal law-making. The French *States-General* and the Castilian and Portuguese *Cortes* in the later period scarcely got beyond this. But nothing could be more erroneous than the assumption often made (by writers whose knowledge of Continental systems hardly extends beyond France or Castile) that the English Parliament was the only assembly of that time that discovered how to gain grants of supply depend on redress of grievances, and by drawing up their demands in the form of "bills" ready to become "acts" as soon as they received the royal sanction. In fact both these devices came into vogue in most Continental parliaments in the eastern Spanish kingdoms, Sicily, the German states, Sweden, Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary. Usually this did not exclude the crown from the right to propose a bill, but the crown without the sanction of the estates, but, on the other hand, in Germany at least within certain spheres the estates could propose a bill. In general the principle was widespread that a monarch could not make laws without the consent and participation of parliament; and there were kingdoms like Poland or Aragon where this principle was very strictly carried out.

Thirdly, there was a vast range of functions which these parliaments sometimes arrogated to themselves, especially in times of crisis. They were exercised for long periods in some of the most important matters of state. They were consulted on war, peace, alliances, treaties; nay, sometimes they sent and received embassies, raised armies, and concluded peace or alliances quite of their own authority. Similarly, the last resort of many princes was attempts to dictate the choice of the prince's advisers or to force upon him a council, or to have elected or appointed a regent. The Swedish kings had to submit to thorough scrutiny of their equipment of troops. There are many cases of a parliament appointing

a regent, fixing the succession to the throne, or even for long periods freely electing its rulers. Even more common was the custom that the monarch should prescribe how the taxes they granted should be expended, or should undertake the collection and disbursement through their own agents and treasury. Many parliaments (e. g., the eastern Spanish kingdoms, Languedoc, Brittany, the German states) came to have quite a staff of permanent officials of their own, and to take a large part not only in the financial but in the general administration of the country. Finally, the assumption sometimes made that the English Parliament embodied the functions of a legislative and reorganizing body with those of a high court of justice is supported in the many Continental assemblies of estates present throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Aragon, Poland, and universally among the German states.)

It is also a mistake, and a not uncommon one, to suppose that all the Constitutions of the sixteenth century in France, and that England alone kept her parliament continuously down to modern times. It is true that the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries saw the extinction of not a few of the old parliaments. True disappear in most of the French provinces under Richelieu and Louis XIV; in Portugal (after 1697), the eastern Spanish kingdoms (1707-14), Naples (after 1634), Piedmont (after 1582), Saxony (after 1650), and some of the German states (e. g., Brandenburg after 1669), in Denmark and Norway (after 1661), in Prussia (after 1687). But they survived down to the French Revolution in many instances in a dozen French provinces in Castile, Navarre, Sicily, the Dutch Republic, Belgium, the German Empire, Prussia, many German states (like Saxony and Hanover), Austria, Bohemia, Hungary, Poland, and Sweden. In most of these cases, indeed, the hand of the monarch was heavy upon them, and the estates seemed sunk in lethargy or stricken with palsy. But

in some instances—most notably in Sweden, Poland, Hungary, and among the German states—the monarchs and parliaments continued to show a great deal of life and activity down to the end.

The assemblies that have been survived here had many defects and weaknesses. They were not, at least for modern times, sufficiently representative; they rested on

much with antiquated political and social ideals, and with

cases the crown prevailed over them because it, better than they, represented the

and efficient government. These particular

solidarity and cooperation among the several social classes from those jealousies and conflicts between the estates which played such a rôle in France in 1789, in which

enabled the Danish crown in 1660 by a coup d'état to make itself absolute. And there are many other weaknesses that might be listed: the chaotic methods of electing deputies, imperative mandates, the

enforcing the will of the majority, the unpopularity which in many countries always

associated in men's minds only with new taxes, the desire so often manifested even by the privileged classes to escape from participating in parliament in order to avoid

Nevertheless, the old parliaments in many ways rendered important services. They gave the crown what was on the whole a fruitful and a long indispensable cooperation in building up, out of the chaos and disintegration of feudalism, the unified modern state. By drawing representatives of the leading social classes and of every locality together into regular collaboration on common problems, they helped much to create a sense of common interests and a national spirit. We may also

be grateful to them for having through centuries implemented and maintained in most European countries certain precious

of peoples as against monarchs, no taxation without representation, government carried on through and with the consent of the governed, the representative system. Those ideas might be for a time obscured, but

they were never lost. And when in the nineteenth century the new movements for democracy and constitutionalism set in, most European nations did not need to look abroad entirely for guidance; nearly everywhere the friends of liberty could find traditions, precedents, principles, and inspiration in the records of their own parliaments of the Middle Ages.

THE LIMITATIONS OF ABSOLUTISM IN THE "NEW MONARCHIES"

J. RUSSELL MAJOR

THE concept of a Renaissance has been defended and attacked ever since Burckhardt published his *Civilization of the Renaissance* in Italy nearly a century ago. There are those who see in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries a definite period of European history. Others recognize in these years only a continued growth that had begun well back in the Middle Ages. Still others look on the two centuries as a period of transition from the medieval civilization. The attitude of the scholar is determined in part by his field of research.

It is the purpose of this paper to present a strong supporter of the thesis that there was a Renaissance and that it constituted a definite historical period. The economic historian often prefers to see the real change as taking place around the eleventh century with the revival of trade and the growth of towns. The devout Catholic, on the other hand, interprets the period as being one of a decline, beginning with the false teachings of William of Occam and ending in the horrible tragedy of Luther and Descartes. Students of literature, sci-

ence, philosophy, and political theory have added their ideas to further confuse the concept of the Renaissance, but although there are political historians apart from, little effort has been made to interpret the period from the standpoint of the nature of the state, this in spite of the fact that Burckhardt saw in the peculiar political situation in Italy one of the principal causes of the Italian Renaissance.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the nature of monarchies in the north and west of Italy, paying particular attention to France. It is my hope to add support to Burckhardt's thesis that the state of this period differed enough from what had gone before and what was to come after, to constitute a definite period in history, but to deny that the Swiss scholar's bold

statement of the Renaissance as being a work of art, that is, "the fruit of reflection and careful adaptation, has any validity for the monarchies of that

In developing the concept of a Renaissance Monarchy for France we must the

dering from one part of their kingdom to another, crossing every one of the barriers of rigid hierarchy and order, there was a degree of intimacy between the kings and the people that is nowhere to be found in republican Venice. In 1561 one of them attributed the devotion of the French people to the crown to "the familiarity which exists between the monarch and his subjects all of whom he treats as his companions. No one is excluded from his presence. Ladies and people of lower condition are admitted to the palace office of the king in order to see everything that happens and to hear it," but is said if one wishes to speak of something important, he must have the patience to wait a time where there are not a great many people and then speak in a low voice in order not to be heard. This great familiarity, it is true, makes the subjects insolent, but at the same time it makes them faithful and devoted to their kings." We would do well to picture the Renaissance Monarch as being the "Sun gentleman" of France rather than the "Sun King." The removal of the court to Versailles by Louis XIV was symbolic of the separation of the crown from the people during his reign, and the return of the court to Paris in 1789 could have had equal importance had an abler man been the head of the nation.

A more tangible way of winning support also lay in the power of the kings. They controlled a vast system of patronage. Most of the highest offices of the church lay at their disposal and the wealthiest bishoprics and abbeys went to their faithful supporters. Government positions, one of the most attractive of a formal employment during the period, found their way into the same hands. Gifts, patents of nobility, and nearly every type of privilege could be granted by the monarch. He who served the crown loyally and ably could hope for untold riches. Montmorency, Wolsey, and Richelieu were only the most famous of those who won wealth and power through loyalty. Thousands of lesser names could be added.

One last way of winning popular support was through the use of representative institutions. It may seem strange that kings encouraged and developed assemblies of the estates, but since neither the medieval nor the Renaissance Monarchs had even heard of representative government, they could have foreseen no reason to ignore or suppress representative assemblies. They regarded these institutions as tools to be used as they wished and their use of and toward them is true that representative assemblies sometimes got out of hand and became too critical also checked the king upon occasion. As long as he could get his job done he ignored the assemblies and let them alone. The one was a more dangerous than the other and he used them as a check upon occasion. The use of the estates was of course during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and it was not because the assemblies were

The practice of holding national assemblies declined in most countries in the Renaissance period. But was revived by the Renaissance Monarchs. These kings were faced with problems growing out of the new world. One was the loss of the New World which led to a rapid rise in prices. Higher prices, in turn, necessitated higher taxes and the king was forced to call the estates. The second great change was the first step toward the separation of the church and state. The king had no right to the bureaucracy and he was to come with the new situation. The king's hope was to win the support of the people for whatever action they determined to take. Thus they could best do by summoning the deputies of the people and explaining to them their policy and needs. It was not often that the burgher from the town or the seigneur from the manor constituted sufficient counterpoise to the crown in these occasions, and once a Parliament or Estate General had committed itself to the desired course,

the king had a powerful propaganda weapon. He told them that he had won the sanction of the people in the ordinance he issued and in the decision he had reached. Agents who represented the royal will to their constituents when they returned to the homes.

The king had no fear of the assemblies of the estates because these institutions were generally not independent. They were independent power by need, the meaning of the word perhaps put into the king's mouth was that the king's assemblies were to be used as a power by enabling them to extend their influence into fields of activity ordinarily denied to them. This attitude is illustrated by Philippe de Commines when, in writing of a proposed invasion of the continent in 1474 by England, he said "But things move very slowly there because the king cannot undertake such work without assembling his parliament, which is like our three estates, and, consisting of sober and prudent men, is very serviceable and a great strengthening of the crown. When these estates are assembled, he declares his intention and asks his subjects for an aid."

To Commines the English Parliament did not decrease the power of the king by preventing him from levying an aid without consent. Rather Parliament increased his power by making it possible for him legally to obtain money beyond his ordinary revenue. In the same spirit Henry VIII declared to the Commons in 1543 "We at no time stand so highly in our estate royal as in time of Parliament, wherein we as head and you as members are conjoined and knit together in one body politic."

Henry III of France stated that "holding the estates is a means . . . to reaffirm the legitimate authority of the sovereign rather than to disturb or diminish it." Jean Bodin wrote: "We conclude, therefore, that the sovereignty of the monarch is neither altered nor diminished by the presence of the estates. On the contrary, his majesty is much greater and more

illustrious seeing his people acknowledge him as their sovereign."

Statements such as these could be multiplied without end, and nearly all the Renaissance Monarchs put theory into practice by endeavoring to win popular support for their program. In every country from Spain to Sweden rulers turned to the estates or assemblies for additional taxes, and in England, Denmark, and Sweden the kings successfully used their estates or Parliaments to introduce Protestantism. In the Empire, Scotland, the Low Countries, and France the monarchs also went to the estates to solve the religious problem, but with less success. Civil wars broke out, and it was only then that the theory began to develop that the representative assembly had its authority separate from the crown. It was only then that the kings began to dread the meetings of the estates.

I have described the Renaissance Monarchy as being a decentralized state with confused boundaries and jurisdictions, but motivated by the forces of dynamism, legality, and tradition. Its strength lay not in the size or loyalty of its army or bureaucracy, but rather in the support it received from the people. It remains to be shown that the nature of this state differed enough from what has gone before and what was to come after to give support to the thesis that the Renaissance constitutes a separate period in history.

The medieval state had also been dynamic. It had relied on popular support, but it nevertheless differed from that of the Renaissance. Medieval decentralization was derived largely from the activities of the great feudal nobles and their vassals. Renaissance decentralization was essentially bureaucratic. Thus in the Middle Ages the duchy of Burgundy was governed by her duke, in the Renaissance it was ruled by a royal governor and subordinate officials; there were several types of sovereign courts to administer justice and provincial estates

surveys of which, fifty years after their publication, one can say that the best things are still valid. But one can say just that of Pollard's volume on the history of England from 1547 to 1603. And of course his biographies of Henry VIII, Elizabeth, and Wolsey remain without peer.

Factors in Modern History was no such perfect performance, and certainly Pollard would not have claimed that it was so. Why then, a reader might properly ask, should he have inflicted on him a long disquisition in a book which, more than half a century ago, a book which, although published in the first half of the century, be described as a classic of history? One might answer that, classic or not, *Factors in Modern History* is still quite a live book. In America within the past year it has been freed from larval compression between hard covers and metamorphosed, indeed spout-cased, into a paper-back. Moreover, so it has been told me, generations of English schoolmasters have used *Factors in Modern History* to introduce sixth formers to the study of history above the merely infantile. It has thus become a bit of standard equipment for the initiation rites of the young phratry.

Yet even were it less gorgeously covered with badges of success, the book would warrant examination. For the purpose of this study *Factors in Modern History* has a special virtue which results from the quality of A. F. Pollard's mind. It was a mind strong and unswayed, one which passionately sought for and found its own line in the sixteenth century that mind produced a work of broad perspective. The book portrays its primary hues and with his eye fixed on the horizon the best thing of fifty years ago — a good part of this age is now — on the sixteenth century and on that particularly difficult period, the sixteenth century. One would have said the Tudor period, were it not that in this book Pollard casts his glance, somewhat casually and dimly one must confess, at continental Europe. *Factors in Modern History*, therefore, provides us with a sort

of color chart. Contrasting it with the views of a predecessor, however, in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, we become aware of some of the changes that have taken place in our understanding of history in the past half century.

Before we make such a contrast, however, we ought to render to Pollard the homage that is his due for the assault he made on the history of the sixteenth day. It was a day — before Armageddon — when English local Parliamentary democracy was first fully and when the proposed excellences were frequently ascribed to certain superior national traits, as it is to the English people. In the kind of English history, the product of our nineteenth-century school pompous and silly — on the role of race in English history. Pollard wrought a splendid destruction. And of history writing that praised a mythical Lancastrian constitution because it was supposed to have an origin in the time of the great king, he was the first to have shown that it was a myth. In the history of the Tudor period, they were supposed to have introduced the growth of Parliament, he made short work of it. If it did not make it impossible for historians to talk such nonsense — nothing seems to prevent a really determined historian from talking nonsense — he has shown that it was a myth. In *Factors in Modern History*, he made short work of it and demanded of the historian a more realistic perspective. For his holocaust of historical idols we are all still debtors to A. F. Pollard.

Now, having rescued our meed of praise, we must turn to the less congenial task of examining the book. The deficiencies of the past half-century of history writing have revealed in a way which is now becoming more and more belatedly clear to us. We are now working in the same craft, the art of history. A certain dialectic requires us to augment, or modify, or partially destroy the work of our predecessors in order to advance that art. Since it is a condition of the proper exercise of our art that we add to, refine, reconstruct and sometimes reject

what we have inherited from our predecessors, then, that we do so, does not diminish our admiration of those historians who in the course of the work of others who we seek to do better than they.

Often, in the history of modern history, which Pollard deemed most important are revealed in the headings of the early chapters of the book. "The Middle Class," "The New Monarchy," "Henry the Eighth and the Reformation," "Parliament," and "The Social Revolution." These are the factors which Pollard thought were the most important in the history of the sixteenth century. These factors seem to be the two most interrelated, but not wholly interdependent, factors to consider — the emergence of the middle class and the rise of the middle class. Having isolated these two factors in his first two chapters, in the remaining chapters Pollard describes their impact on the fabric of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century society.

Thus, the chapter on "The New Monarchy" demonstrates the triumphant political and economic of the middle class. The chapter on "Henry the Eighth and the Reformation" shows how the middle class and the middle class of the sixteenth century the concurrent aims and aspirations of the national sovereign and of the middle class. The chapter on "Parliament" shows how the middle class and the middle class of the sixteenth century the concurrent aims and aspirations of the national sovereign and of the middle class. The chapter on "The Social Revolution" shows how the middle class and the middle class of the sixteenth century the concurrent aims and aspirations of the national sovereign and of the middle class.

Fifty years after the publication of *Factors in Modern History*, the historians would deny that the middle class men of the sixteenth century and of the middle class men of the sixteenth century and of the middle class men of the sixteenth century and of the middle class men of the sixteenth century.

that surprised and disappointed that of the landed aristocracy. Few also would deny that in that world a passionate identification with the national state superseded an identification with the universal Church as the center of men's ultimate loyalties. The doubts that Pollard's arguments might encounter today would not be directed toward these two facts, but toward his chronology. Was the middle class quite so important, quite so masterful, in the sixteenth century, as Pollard thought it was? Was the national state quite so predominant in power, quite so pre-eminent among the loyalties of men, in the sixteenth century, as Pollard supposed? To both these questions the answer of most present-day historians probably would be "No."

In the first place, the question of the middle class, it is unnecessary to spend much time here. It may be worth mentioning here, however, that some of the methods by which historians have tried to prove the dominance of men of the town and trade in sixteenth-century England and sixteenth-century Europe have been a trifle peculiar. For example, a gauge which measures the power of a class by the number of its members who bought their way out of it and into the land, and the speed with which they did so, is a very ambiguous measure indeed, and the data from it are open to great misinterpretation. Although a suspicion that the middle class was not rising in the sixteenth century in quite the way formerly alleged has taken hold among professional specialists, it has scarcely corrupted the sweet and ancient minds of the writers of textbooks, in whose works that class continues to ascend for six centuries or so in a smooth Pollardian way. But in matters of this sort a lag of three or four decades is to be expected among the writers of history textbooks, and we historians are nothing if not patient.

The myth of the national state will probably prove even more durable than the myth of the middle class.

As to the role Pollard ascribed to the

universal-federal-medieval on the one hand, Protestant and State to national middle-class-modern on the other. This propensity, strong in Poillard and his contemporaries and still strong today, seems to mark the triumph of a desire for simple order over a desire to face the facts of the sixteenth century Protestantism, especially in its Calvinist version, was not marked by the same class. It attracted Norfolk and Gederland squires and the Western Englishman as powerfully as it did bourgeois in London, Antwerp and Edinburgh. And it was the "internationalism" of the Calvinists — their readiness to render material aid and undergo bodily danger to render assistance to the persecuted Saints in foreign lands — that prevented the Papal counter-offensive from destroying Protestantism. The conviction which Calvinism originally developed with respect to the relation of State & Church received its most consistent expression when the Scottish minister, Andrew Melville, plucked that would-be divine-right monarch James VI of Scotland by the sleeve, called him "God's silly vassal," and intimated him that although James was King of Scotland, even so he was King of the Kingdom of the Church, "whose subject King James VI is, and of whose Kingdom not a King . . . nor a head but a member." And Melville adds that the minister "whom Christ has called and commanded to watch over His church have sufficient power . . . of Him so to do . . . the which no Christian prince should control or discharge." To the conviction Calvinism held that Christ was not a promise of pie in the sky but a call to present action. To many a European prince it was a clear instruction as well. Until we grasp that the claims of Protestantism were not national or middle-class, that they were quite as universal, quite as catholic, and, in that dubious sense, quite as medieval, as the claims of the Papacy, we shall not understand the currents of the later sixteenth century. But then the taxonomy that completely subsumes Catholic under medieval and feudal is itself pecor-

It is a somewhat arbitrary way to classify a faith which flourished almost two thousand years ago in the great cities of imperial Rome and which today enjoys a resurgence among the urban population of the great cities of industrial America.

[illegible]

the other pairs there is tension, the issue is *either-or*; it is always more-or-less. With respect to the interests of town and ~~handed down and never of~~ *country* and region, of court and country, the question in the sixteenth century is never how one can annihilate the other: it is how to strike a viable balance between them, how under varying conditions to work out ever anew the terms of adjustment and reconciliation.

Failure to keep this point in mind can be fatal to our understanding of the sixteenth century, and nowhere more so than in grasping the relationship between Realpolitik, or *raison d'État*, and *raison de Dieu*. We are likely — as we have seen — to see the discrepancy between the sixteenth-century statesman's profession of concern for the rightful public order of Christendom and his complete opportunism in practice and to write off the profession as a cynicism of fraudulence. By way of reason we then ascribe the statesman's fervent advocacy of legality in the international arena to his moral hypocrisy. But this is not so. It is more likely that the major statesmen of the age — Catherine and Perronet, Robert and Elizabeth Cecil and Wolsey — even Wolsey and Thomas Cromwell — were both political realists and men concerned with legitimacy. The trouble was that, in the sphere of relations among rulers, the medieval structure of institutions was wholly shattered and afforded no foothold for aspirations toward a legitimate order. It was only in the sphere of domestic politics, and even before, the old pretences; but they acted, perforce, like a gang of dining-room cannibals. Within the realm, however, where much of the framework of institutions remained relatively intact, the king by virtue of his position and practice became the source of a power that he could do and what they felt it necessary and desirable to obey. The concept of legitimacy had something substantial to hang on to. If that is so, the actions of people like Henry VIII and

Elizabeth I there may be a closer correspondence than most historians have been willing to grant.

Among the polarities mentioned earlier there are two that may be worth a little further discussion, because it seems likely that in the near future a good deal of the historical writing on the sixteenth century will focus on them, or at least it seems desirable that such writing should. They are dynasty-region and court-country. We have already watched Garrett Mattingly make short work of the illusion that national interest was the guiding star on which sixteenth-century monarchs set the course of their policy. But if not on national interest, on what did they set their course? Professor Mattingly says,

It is not a religiously motivated power, but a dynamic, not a national, orientation. The Kingdom of Naples and the Duchy of Milan were the only Italian principalities. The acquisition of either would increase the apparent size of the empire with its allies, and the acquisition of one or more the benefit of Italy. In the words of the capitulation documents, "We have not inquired with a hostile eye, as people do, and we wish they were not, at our neighbor's power." No body expected that they would be handed over. (Diplomacy, pp. 352-3)

What counted most in high politics in Tudor times was not the fact that the monarch was the commander-in-chief of the army, but the fact that he was the fount of honor and grace. It was the monarch's duty to be the dispenser of grace and honor, and it was his prerogative to bestow titles and lands. The monarch was the fount of grace and honor, and it was his prerogative to bestow titles and lands. The monarch was the fount of grace and honor, and it was his prerogative to bestow titles and lands.

At the pole opposite to the density was not a pole but a high region. To give a name to what was at the opposite pole is not easy. The word "region" may be in English to the more satisfactory but not perfect French word, *pois*. In the sense

image of the historical process will differ drastically from Pollard's. The sense of inevitable, straight-line trends, so strong in him, diminishes. The sense of the catastrophic, which Pollard minimizes, increases. For a while at the turn of the fifteenth century, the tensions among various poles stand in rough and complex balance, and the adjustments necessary to maintain a workable equilibrium are relatively small. Then a couple of wholly unpredictable things happen. Luther successfully defies the Pope, the conquistadors discover the precious metal hoards and mines of America. Within a few decades these events drastically augment the tensions in the system. The areas in which men can get along on the more-or-less type of decision shrink. The areas in which they have to face either-or decisions expand. As such decisions increase in number, they also increase in importance; both what decisions will have to be made next, and what their proximate consequences will be, become increasingly hard for contemporaries to predict, and the stream of happenings flows not with glacial majesty but with devastating violence.

The catastrophic character of history at times of crises is reflected in the kind of history writing that can deal with such times. Analytical history, the sort of history that Pollard wrote in *Factors*, and the sort that has become increasingly popular in academic circles since, runs into trouble amid the convulsions of a world in upheaval. It often pretends that they really weren't convulsions, or that they really didn't matter. But, of course, they really were convulsions, and they really did matter. At this point, the narrative historian must take over from the analytical historian; for it is his art not to demonstrate that the course of events was inevitable, but, in the midst of mounting uncertainties, to render the decisions men made intelligible.

And here, in the past fifty years, our movement has not been progressively forward, or even, crablike, sideways; but

simply backward. Living in the tradition of both Macaulay and Ranke, A. F. Pollard did not need to be told that history is an intricate sequence of the acts of men in time; and that ultimately, to do justice to that sequence, one needs to tell a story. That his own volume in the *Political History of England* series, written in 1910, remains even now the best single treatment of the era it covers sufficiently testifies to Pollard's mastery of narrative. Today, however, orthodox academic historians tend to put story-telling under a ban. To tell a story well is to commit the scandalous sin of being popular if one is not an academic, or of being a romantic historian if one is an academic. Putting story-telling under a ban does not, of course, make it possible to traverse the period between say, Luther's breach with Rome and the Edict of Nantes without telling a story. It does, however, make it possible for some academic historian to tell such stories incompetently while smugly regarding their ineptitude as an infallible mark of redemptive merit, of their superiority to those damned historians who tell their stories well.

Having dealt with an explicit assumption that colored Pollard's view of what happened in modern history, we may conclude this essay with a brief examination of one of his tacit or inexplicit assumptions. This assumption is still current among many historians, and in all likelihood it remains tacit, I suspect, because historians are not aware that they are making it. Since the assumption is not directly expressed, it is rather difficult to find the right words to describe it. The assumption of the conservation of historical energy is reasonably satisfactory, although the wages-fund theory of the historical process, or the teeter-totter or seesaw theory, might do just as well. The model in this instance, one may guess, was taken from Newtonian physics rather than from Darwinian natural history. Stated rather abstractly, the idea is that in a given society the energy expended on a single pair of polar elements is fixed, so that any flow of social energy in

the direction of one such pole can only take place by way of subtraction from the flow of energy to the opposite pole. So abstractly stated, the idea, I fear, may seem trivial, or unintelligible, or both. Let us try to make it a little more concrete. Earlier we mentioned secular and religious as polar phenomena. In so doing, we aimed to point up the contrast between aspirations and actions directed toward this-worldly and those directed toward other-worldly goals. Granted that in particular cases it is not always possible to make a clear-cut distinction, still, to suggest an extreme instance, it is not too hard to decide toward which pole the lustful glutton tends, and toward which the martyr, toward which Alexander VI and toward which Savonarola. Now, on the assumption of the conservation of historical energy, if in a society there is an increase of activity in the direction of the secular pole, there must be a corresponding decrease of energy in the direction of the religious pole. Moreover and therefore, for the historian who makes the assumption, the increase in the secular direction is itself sufficient evidence of the decrease in the religious direction. Although this corollary to the assumption of the conservation of historical energy is an intellectual trap of the most lethal sort, I fear that the abstractness of my exposition still conceals the clear, present, and practical danger which I have been trying to reveal. Perhaps the surest, if not the kindest, way to reveal the danger of this trap is to show what happens when someone falls into it.

In *Factors in Modern History*, A. F. Pollard falls into it. Throughout his book, but especially in the chapter on "Henry the Eighth and the Reformation," Pollard makes a very good case for the intensification of this-worldliness in the sixteenth century. And he does not nearly exhaust the evidence supporting his case. Consider the boast of Elizabethan statesmen—a strangely secular boast in view of the Christian tradition in such matters—that they intended to punish no one for his religious beliefs. Consider the French

politiques—French Catholics, who yet professed the hope of this-worldly peace, held out by the Edict of Nantes, to their Christian duty to extirpate heresy. Consider even Philip of Spain, who, long after the Pope had excommunicated the English Jerebel, was still ready to negotiate for a peaceful settlement of his differences with her.

The evidence, then, strongly indicates that many sixteenth-century men aimed at, and even openly avowed, secular goals which almost all men of the thirteenth century would have rejected with an outward show of horror and, quite possibly, with real inward loathing. These being the facts about this-worldliness, the secular, in the sixteenth century, what inferences about other-worldliness, about the religious, can we properly draw from them? The answer, of course, is that we can properly draw no inferences whatever about other-worldliness in the sixteenth century from these facts. Any commitment with respect to other-worldliness in the sixteenth century, that is, with respect to any historical phenomenon in any century, should follow and never precede the historical investigation of that phenomenon at that time. It must not be derived from the investigation of the opposite or polar phenomenon alone. Yet without a moment of hesitation Pollard, and a great many historians since Pollard, have habitually, perhaps even unconsciously, inferred from the facts about this-worldliness in the sixteenth century the decline of other-worldliness in that age. Why did Pollard do it? He did it because he had fallen into the lethal trap I have been trying not very successfully to describe, the trap created by the corollary about evidence which follows from his assumption about the conservation of historical energy. He took the demonstrable increase in the flow of energy and activity to the secular pole to be adequate evidence of the flow of activity and energy away from the religious pole. And here in a quite concrete instance the assumption about the conservation of historical energy has ex-

exercised a practical and very malign influence on historical imagination. Since they have already taken it as given that otherworldliness declined in the sixteenth century, Pollard and many other historians have had either to disregard facts which suggest that things were otherwise or they have had to explain such facts away. Neither alternative is a very happy one, since both, instead of helping us to make sense of one of the most conspicuous sequences of facts in the sixteenth century, force us to make nonsense of it. That conspicuous sequence of facts is the one which runs from the religious revival, exemplified but not exhausted by Christian humanism, through the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, to the Wars of Religion. That this series of events indicates that the sixteenth century underwent an intensity and extension of religious concern beyond anything which had been experienced or imagined in the fifteenth century is a historical inference practically beyond doubt.

Only something *extra-historical* could blind able historians to a fact so obvious. We have identified that extra-historical entity — the assumption of the conservation of historical energy. If we get rid of the assumption, we get rid of our difficulty and can look squarely at the historical facts. Once we realize that the religious and the secular, although polar to one another, can, both at once, rise to higher levels of intensity, we will recognize that they both *did* as rise in the sixteenth century. From 1517 on, the religious revival which had begun earlier got caught up in the one historical polarity of the sixteenth century which was unconditional and absolute — the polarity between Catholic and Protestant. Under such circumstances its very intensity threatened the civil order and the security of every land in Western Christendom. But men — almost all men — are concerned not only with matters of creed and ideology, they are also concerned with civil order, which is the framework of their living from day to day. And for secular rulers the maintenance of civil order is at

once a necessity and, according to the views current in the sixteenth century, a part of their duty to God. When the intensified pull toward the religious pole found expression in mortal strife between Catholic and Protestant, is it really any wonder that men of theory, like Bodin, felt impelled to think through afresh the problem of political obligation, that men of judgment, like Montaigne, felt the need to dampen the fires of sectarian ardor, and that statesmen, regardless of their religious preference, felt driven to play the European power game with a cold and careful calculation of the consequences of each move? Whether in the particular situation domestic order, or place in the European state system, or both, were involved, the conflict over religion had set a painfully high price on errors or weakness in the game of power in the sixteenth century. So Mary Stuart learned to her cost in Scotland, and Philip II to his cost in the Netherlands. So the French learned through a generation of devastating and bloody religious civil war. If, in the sixteenth century, many men displayed an intense preoccupation with chilly computations of this-worldly advantage, it was in part at least because they felt at their backs the burning heat of religious conflagration.

It was my intention to bring this essay to a close with an apology for its scantiness in the matter of history, the missing of fact, and for its preoccupation with the forms of historical explanation. Yet after all, had the deployment of a mass of fact seemed more desirable to me on this occasion than a contemplation of problems of historical form, there was nothing to prevent such a deployment. But history writing is more than a piling up of facts; it is an arranging, an ordering of facts. Its goal is not only to state what happened, but to render what happened increasingly intelligible, and we must concern ourselves not only with ways of getting data, but with ways of putting data together. Our refined methods of assessing evidence and establishing facts, of which we are justly proud, should not be the only tools of our craft. Historians *must*

to be a most eclectic band of workers, jacks-of-many-trades, if not of all. We should be ready to bring to bear on the problems of ordering intelligibly these facts at our disposal, the whole range of our remembered experiences — what we know about other disciplines, the insights we have gained from literature, and, perhaps most important, though surely least cultivated, a certain good sense and solidity of judgment

which we may acquire if we go reflectively about the business of living our own lives. In the indispensable fervor of collecting vast stacks of 4 in. by 6 in. cards, covered with priceless, although somewhat incoherent bits of information, let us not forget what Pollard knew so well and exemplified so clearly in *Factors in Modern History*: "He also serves," who sometimes sits and thinks.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL READING

A comprehensive discussion of the recent literature on the subject we have dealt with is not available. The nearest thing to such a discussion is the article by Roland Mousnier and Fritz Hartung, "Quelques problèmes concernant la monarchie absolue," *Relazioni del X congresso internazionale di scienze storiche* (Florence, 1955), IV, *Storia Moderna*. Good discussions of the nature of sixteenth century political institutions and the social and economic changes of the period can be found in any of the standard multi-volume histories now available. In the English series *The New Cambridge Modern History* there is the volume edited by G. R. Potter, *The Renaissance, 1493-1520* (Cambridge, 1957), and that edited by G. R. Elton, *The Reformation, 1520-1559* (Cambridge, 1958). The excellent French series *Peuples et Civilisations* contains *La fin du Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1931), part 2, *L'annonce des temps nouveaux*, edited by Henri Pirenne and others. In the same series there is the excellent volume in which Henri Hauser contributed heavily: *Les débuts de l'âge moderne* (Paris, 1956). Roland Mousnier's *Les XVI^e et XVII^e siècles* (Paris, 1961), vol. IV of *Histoire générale des civilisations*, is an excellent recent synthesis. The great German scholar Gerhard Ritter is the general editor of the series *Geschichte der Neuzeit*, in which Erich Haeussinger's *Das Werden des Neuzeitlichen Europa* appeared in 1959. The leading multi-volume history by American scholars is *The Rise of Modern Europe*, in which two excellent volumes relevant to our theme, both containing important bibliographic essays, have appeared to date. These are Myron P. Gilmore's *The World of Humanism* (New York, 1952) and Carl Friedrich's *The Age of the Baroque* (New York, 1952).

More specialized studies in English are not nearly so easy to find. The literature dealing with the "New Monarchies," their

antecedents and environment, is largely a European literature. But excellent studies of an advanced sort do exist. The economic institutions and social structure of the age of nascent absolutism and constitutional conflict is discussed in F. L. Numism, *A History of the Economic Institutions of Modern Europe* (New York, 1913), a volume that summarizes the massive studies of Werner Sombart, whose *Der Bourgeois* remains a classic on the appearance of the middle class, despite its 1913 publication date. Important for the same background questions is the work of J. H. Hexter, *Reappraisals in History* (Evanston, 1961).

Specifically political institutions, especially parliamentary or representative institutions, their origins and early modern development in conflict with the centralizing tendencies of the Renaissance princes, are discussed in a number of important works. Pride of place must perhaps be allowed to Otto Hintze's "Weltgeschichtliche Bedingungen des Repräsentativverfassung," which appeared in *Historische Zeitschrift*, CXLIII (1931), 1-47, where older ideas about the medieval origins of representative institutions are codified. Some of the same issues are discussed by F. Chabod, "Y a-t-il un état de la Renaissance," *Actes du colloque sur la Renaissance* (Paris, 1958), pp. 57-78, as well as in Hexter's volume mentioned above and Sir G. N. Clark's incisive *The Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1947). The 2nd part of a volume of essays presented to Helen Maud Cam, *Album Helen Maud Cam: Studies Presented to the International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions*, XXIV (Louvain, 1961), contains several important essays on the subject here discussed. See especially the articles by B. Lyon, "Medieval Constitutionalism," 155-183, and F. L. Carsten, "The Causes of the Decline of the German Estates," 287-296. For England prela-

mentary institutions have a special significance, and English scholars and their American counterparts have contributed to our understanding of their role in the sixteenth century. The most important modern works are those by Sir John E. Neale, especially his *The Elizabethan House of Commons* (London, 1949) and his two-volume study of Queen Elizabeth's parliaments, entitled *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments* (London, 1953). Earlier studies by Wallace Notestein, *The Winning of the Initiative by the House of Commons* (London, 1926) and A. F. Pollard's *The Evolution of Parliament* (New York, 1926), are valuable for the light they throw on the use made of parliaments by the earlier Tudors. Part and Present, Number 25 (July, 1963), 3-59, contains a symposium on the Tudor State, focusing on Dr. Elton's "revolution," but with attention given to the views of Pollard and Professor Richardson, especially in the article by Dr. Penry Williams. For France the best recent works are those by J. Russell Major, whose monographs on various aspects of the Renaissance monarchy in France have contributed greatly to the revisionist school. In addition to the work reprinted here his *The Estates-General of 1560* (Princeton, 1951) and *The Deputies to the Estates General of Renaissance France* (Wisconsin, 1960), are especially important, the more so because he disagrees pointedly with Chabod and also with the leading Spanish authority, Jaime Vincen Vives. Two of Major's articles may also be mentioned: "The Loss of Royal Initiative and the Decay of the Estates-General in France, 1421-1615," *Album Helen Maud Cam: Studies Pre-*

sented to the International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions (Louvain, 1961), XXIV, 247-259; and "The French Renaissance Monarchy as seen through the Estates General," *Studies in the Renaissance*, IX (1962), 113-125. The available literature on the Netherlands is more slight, but Pieter Geyl, *The Revolt of the Netherlands* (London, 1958) and H. G. Koenigberger's "The Organization of Revolutionary Parties in France and the Netherlands during the 16th Century," *Journal of Modern History*, XXVII (1955), 335-351, are useful.

There is not a very extensive literature on the development of royal or parliamentary administrative organs. The best treatment of bureaucracy and its role in the sixteenth century context for power is found in the concluding chapters of G. E. Aylmer's *The King's Servants* (London, 1961), a work concerned with the civil service under Charles I, but which deals with the historical problem of political institutions and bureaucracy in England and on the Continent in a masterly fashion. For a comparative study of administrative developments and the role of office in royal government K. W. Sweet's *The Sale of Office in the 17th Century* (The Hague, 1949), despite its title, is valuable for the earlier period. Finally, it needs to be said that the student wishing further insight into this aspect of the problem or, indeed, any other line of investigation, ought to go to the standard bibliographies and to the journals. All of the leading periodicals carry useful summaries of recent literature, as well as reviews of important works.

